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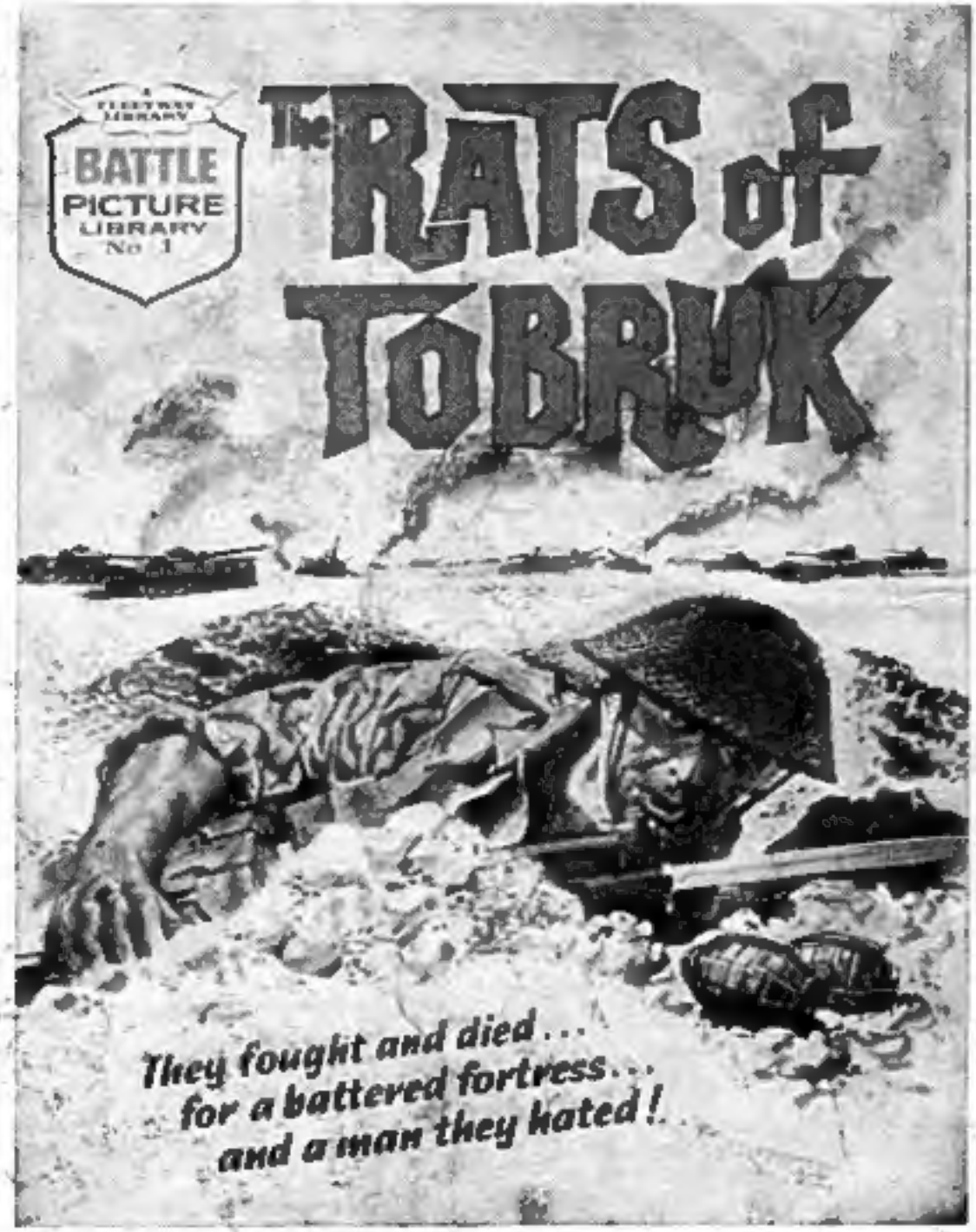

TWO Dramatic, All-action Issues Every Month

BANZAI!

IN THE FEW TERRIBLE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED PEARL HARBOUR, AT THE END OF 1941 AND THE BEGINNING OF 1942, THE DEFENCES OF THE ALLIES IN THE FAR EAST AND THE PACIFIC COLLAPSED LIKE A PACK OF CARDS. THE U.S. NAVY WAS TEMPORARILY CRIPPLED; HONG KONG, THE PHILLIPINES, JAVA, SINGAPORE... ALL WERE SUBMERGED IN THE YELLOW FLOOD THAT WAS SWEEPING SOUTH. AND TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA, IT SEEMED AS THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN LEFT TO THEIR FATE.

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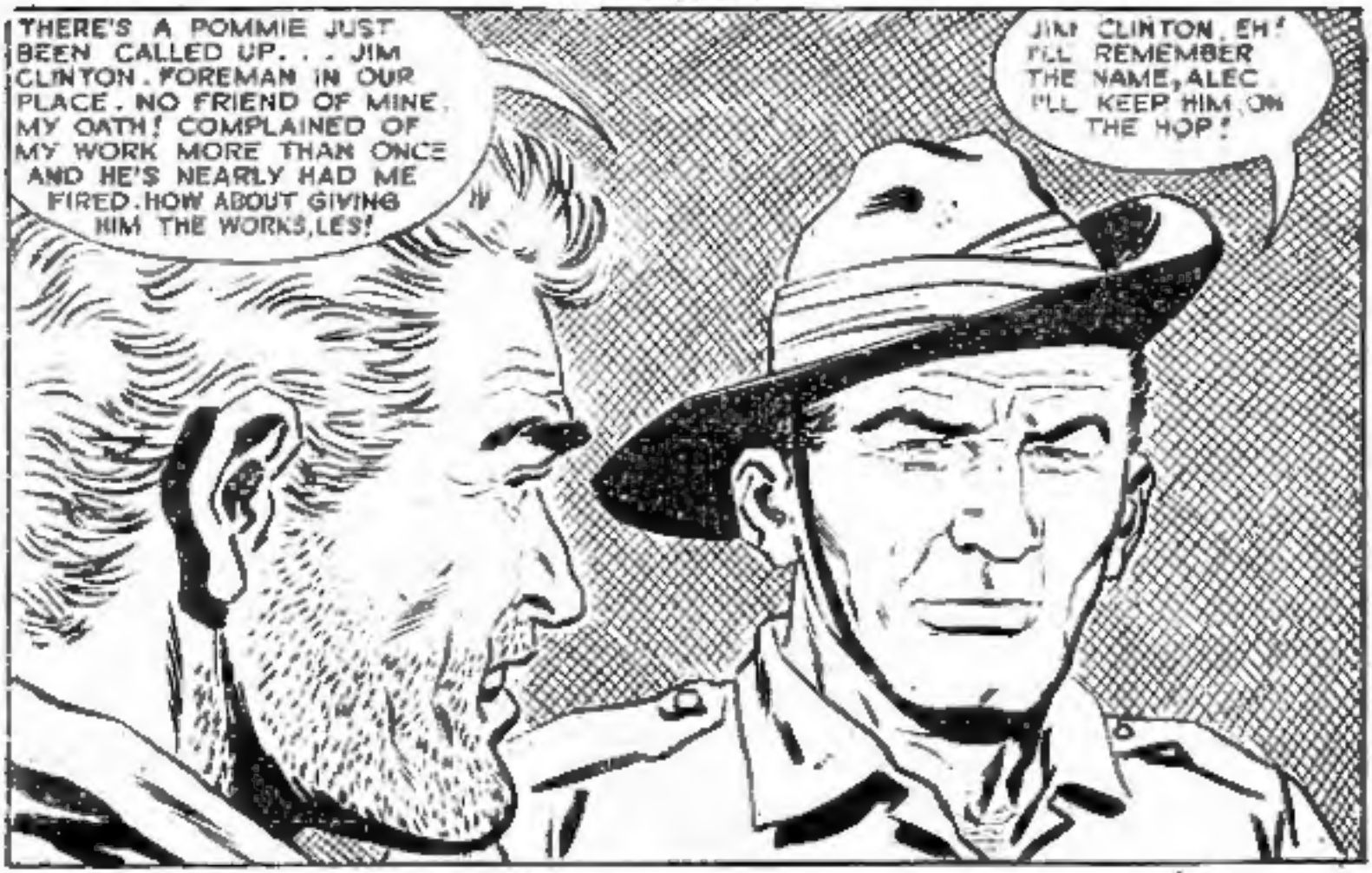
Chapter 1. POMMIE MILITIAMAN

BUT AUSTRALIANS ARE NOTHING IF NOT FIGHTERS, AND THEY SET ABOUT PREPARING TO DEFEND THEIR COUNTRY WITH GRIM DETERMINATION. WHILE THE REGULAR DIVISIONS OF THE ARMY WERE BEING RECALLED FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, THE MILITIA WERE CALLED UP FOR FULL-TIME TRAINING, AND AMONGST THE MILITIAMEN IN DARWIN WAS AN ENGLISHMAN, JIM CLINTON, WHO WAS A FOREMAN MOTOR-MECHANIC.

BUT ALEC BURKE, A BURLY MECHANIC WHO HAD ALWAYS RESENTED WORKING UNDER JIM CLINTON, THE ENGLISHMAN, HAD OTHER IDEAS. HE VOICED THEM SNEERINGLY . . .
IMAGINE CALLING UP A GREEN POMMIE LIKE THAT! WHAT GOOD WOULD HE BE? HE COULDN'T FIGHT HIS WAY OUT OF A PAPER BAG!
WELL, AT LEAST HE'S IN THE MILITIA . . . WHICH IS MORE THAN YOU CAN SAY!

I'D BE IN IT BUT THEY WON'T TAKE ME! I'VE GOT FLAT FEET, SEE, AND A MILE MARCH WOULD CRIPPLE ME.

THAT EVENING, STILL SMARTING FROM THE GARAGE OWNER'S REMARKS, ALEC BURKE HAD A WORD WITH HIS HALF-BROTHER, SERGEANT LES BURKE.
HEY, LES . . . YOUR MAIN JOB IS TRAINING THE ROOKIES, ISN'T IT?
TOO RIGHT! WHY, MATE?


THERE'S A POMMIE JUST BEEN CALLED UP. . . JIM CLINTON. FOREMAN IN OUR PLACE. NO FRIEND OF MINE. MY OATH! COMPLAINED OF MY WORK MORE THAN ONCE AND HE'S NEARLY HAD ME FIRED. HOW ABOUT GIVING HIM THE WORKS, LES!
JIM CLINTON, EH! I'LL REMEMBER THE NAME, ALEC. I'LL KEEP HIM ON THE HOP!

IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, SERGEANT BURKE DID HIS BEST TO MAKE SOLDIERS OUT OF THE MOTLEY CROWD OF TOUGH RECRUITS.
COME ON . . . THOSE ARE BAYONETS ON THE END OF YOUR RIFLES, NOT KNITTING NEEDLES! RAM 'EM HOME, DARN YOU!
AUSTRALIA

THE SERGEANT SEEMED TO HAVE A SPECIAL 'DOWN' ON JIM CLINTON. AND HE WAS ALWAYS SINGLING OUT THE ENGLISHMAN FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT AND MAKING HIM DO THINGS ON HIS OWN WHILE THE OTHERS WATCHED.
THAT'S BETTER THAN LAST TIME, CLINTON, BUT YOU'RE STILL YARDS TOO SLOW!

IF MEN HAD TO BE DETAILED FOR ANY PARTICULARLY UNPLEASANT JOB, JIM WAS ALWAYS ONE OF THEM.
THE SKEETERS ARE EATING ME ALIVE!
TRUST THAT BURKE TO GIVE US THIS JOB IN THE HOTTEST PART OF THE DAY! THIS IS YOUR FAULT, POMMIE! BURKE DOESN'T LIKE YOU, SO THE SECTION YOU'RE IN GETS ALL THE ROUGH!

THEN CAME THE EVENING WHEN ALEC BURKE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO PICK A QUARREL WITH JIM CLINTON, AND IT HAPPENED AT A TIME WHEN JIM WAS SUFFERING FROM THE AFTER EFFECTS OF SEVERAL SEVERE IMMUNISATION SHOTS . . .

STONE THE CROWS, TALK ABOUT SOLDIERS! IF WE'VE GOT TO DEPEND ON BLOKES LIKE THAT BLINKIN' POMMIE, THEN 'EAVEN 'ELP AUSTRALIA!

BARBE

TALKING ABOUT ME?

THE BLOOD FLAMED IN JIM'S FACE AND HE WHIRLED SAVAGELY.

TOO RIGHT I'M TALKING ABOUT YOU, POMMIE! WANT TO MAKE ANYTHING OF IT?

ANY TIME, BURKE! PUT 'EM UP!

JIM HAD A STIFF AND SWOLLEN LEFT ARM, AND HIS HEAD WAS THROBBING, BUT HE PEELED OFF HIS TUNIC, TOSSED ASIDE HIS HAT, AND WENT IN SO FIERCELY THAT HE TOOK THE BIG AUSSIE BY SURPRISE . . .

UGH-H!

GROCER'S SHO

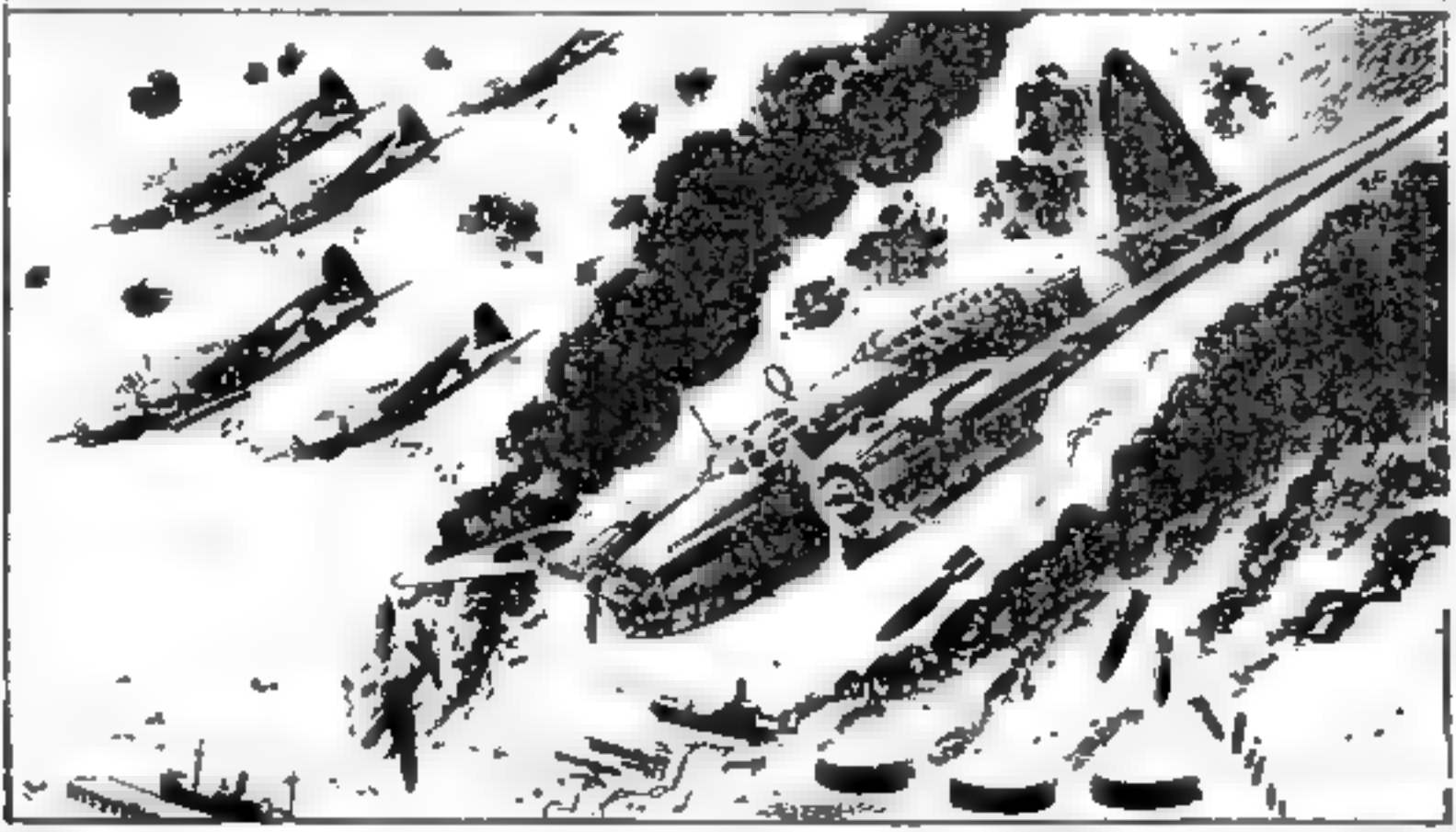
MILITIAMEN AND CIVILIANS CAME RUNNING UP TO WATCH THE FIGHT, BUT SOON JIM'S ARM WAS SO STIFF AND SORE HE COULD HARDLY MOVE IT, AND HIS HEAD WAS REELING . . .
THE POMMIE'S DEAD GAME, ALL RIGHT . . . BUT HE CAN HARDLY RAISE THAT LEFT ARM OF HIS.
BREWE

THE END CAME AT LAST WHEN THE BURLY AUSSIE CRASHED HOME A PILE-DRIVING LEFT . . .

JIM STRUGGLED TO HIS FEET, SICK AND DIZZY, AND WAS READY TO PILE INTO ALEC BURKE AGAIN, BUT 'BLUEY' CAIN GOT BETWEEN THEM . . .
DON'T BE A FOOL, JIM! THIS ISN'T YOUR NIGHT, AND HE'LL MURDER YOU . . . ANYWAY, SAVE YOUR FIGHTING FOR THE NIPS, YOU'LL GET ALL YOU WANT BEFORE LONG!

MEANWHILE, IN ADVANCE HEADQUARTERS ON TIMOR, THE JAPANESE HIGH COMMAND WAS PLANNING ITS NEXT MOVE.
OUR NEXT BLOW MUST BE AT AUSTRALIA ITSELF. HERE AT DARWIN THEY ARE BRINGING IN SUPPLIES AND BUILDING DEFENCES, BUT OUR AIR FORCE CAN DO TO DARWIN WHAT IT DID TO PEARL HARBOUR!

THREE DAYS LATER ON FEBRUARY 21st, 1942 THE PEOPLE OF DARWIN HEARD THE ROAR OF MITSUBISHI BOMBERS IN THE BRASSY SKY. THEN THE JAP PLANES CAME OUT OF THE SUN, AND THE AIR WAS FULL OF WHISTLING BOMBS AND THE EARTH-SHAKING CRASH OF EXPLOSIONS



Banzai!

MEANWHILE THE HARBOUR WAS THE TARGET FOR A CONCENTRATED ATTACK, AND THE CALM STRETCH OF WATER SUDDENLY B OSSOMED INTO GREAT FOUNTAINS OF SMOKE AND SCREAMING DEBRIS WITHIN MINUTES OF THE START OF THE ATTACK, THE SHIPPING LYING AT ANCHOR WAS BLASTED INTO FLAMING WRECKAGE AND OIL STORAGE TANKS ON THE QUAYSIDE WERE SPLIT ASUNDER TO SPILL THEIR BLAZING CONTENTS INTO THE INFERNO

PARTS OF THE TOWN WERE STRICKEN AS THOUGH BY AN EARTHQUAKE, AND THE MILITIA WERE CALLED OUT TO FIGHT FIRES WHILE THE BOMBS WERE STILL DROPPING

AS DARKNESS FELL, THE MALAYS AND CHINESE FROM THE NATIVE QUARTER, TOGETHER WITH THE WHITE RIFF RAFF OF DARWIN, BEGAN TO LOOT THE SHATTERED TOWN . . .

IT WAS THEN THAT BRIGADIER HARPER, COMMANDING THE DARWIN GARRISON, PUT THE MILITIA TO GUARD THE TOWN, AND HE ISSUED STERN ORDERS . . .

LOOTING IS A MOST VILLAINOUS AND TREACHEROUS ACT AND IF YOU SEE ANYONE AT IT SHOOT TO KILL!

IT WAS TWO IN THE MORNING WHEN J.M. CLINTON ON GUARD IN QUEEN STREET IN THE BUSINESS PART OF THE TOWN, SAW A FIGURE SLIP STEALTHILY INTO DECKER'S THE JEWELLER'S THROUGH A GAP IN THE SHATTERED WALL . .

HALT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

BUT THERE WAS NO REPLY TO JIM'S CHALLENGE.

THE MAN MOVED CLOSER AND HE LEVELLED AGAIN. SUDDENLY THE MAN LUNGED FROM THE SHOP AND STARTED TO RUN OFF. JIM CLINTON REMEMBERED HIS ORDERS WERE TO SHOOT TO KILL. BUT HE FOUND HE COULD NOT DO IT IN COLD BLOOD INSTEAD HE FIRED WHAT HE MEANT TO BE A WARNING SHOT OVER THE MAN'S HEAD

DECKER

BUT TO HIS HORROR THE MAN STAGGERED AND CRUMPLED TO THE GROUND . . .

HIS HEART POUNDING JIM RAN UP AND TURNED BY THE MAN. THEN HE CAUGHT HIS BREATH SHARPLY AS HE RECOGNISED THE PALE SILLEN FACE, TWISTED NOW IN SHOCK AND PAIN

ALEC BURKE!

JIM RUSHED OFF TO GET HELP, AND THE BADLY WOUNDED AUSTRALIAN WAS TAKEN TO DARWIN HOSPITAL WHERE THE OVERWORKED DOCTORS PERFORMED AN EMERGENCY OPERATION . . .

PRETTY TOUGH BIRD, THIS STANDS A FAIR CHANCE OF PULLING THROUGH

IN THE MORNING WHEN HE WAS OFF DUTY, JIM WENT TO THE HOSPITAL TO SEE HOW ALEC BURKE WAS GETTING ON. IN THE CORRIDOR HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH SERGEANT BURKE, WHO WAS COMING OUT WITH A SAVAGE OATH. THE SERGEANT REACHED OUT A MUSCULAR HAND AND GRABBED JIM BY THE SHIRT.

CLINTON! YOU...YOU MURDERER!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THE SERGEANT'S VOICE SHOOK WITH ALMOST UNCONTROLLABLE HATRED...
I MEAN THAT ALEC MAY DIE! AND IF HE DOES . . . YOU KILLED HIM! HE WASN'T LOOTING. HE WENT INTO THAT SHOP TO GET A WALLET HE'D DROPPED WHEN HE WAS FIGHTING EARLIER, BUT YOU HATED HIM AFTER THAT LICKING HE GAVE YOU. AND WHEN YOU SAW YOUR CHANCE, YOU LET HIM HAVE IT . . .

HORROR WELLED IN JIM'S HEART AND HE PROTESTED HOTLY . . .
I NEVER EVEN KNEW IT WAS YOUR BROTHER! AND WHAT'S MORE, I NEVER MEANT TO HIT HIM. I AIMED OVER HIS HEAD BUT MY RIFLE-SIGHT HAS BEEN BASHED IN, AND THE SHOT WENT LOW. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, I TELL YOU!
EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT? WELL, I'M TELLING YOU SOMETHING, POMMIE . . . BEFORE THIS WAR IS OVER, I'LL MAKE YOU WISH YOU'D NEVER BEEN BORN! WAIT TILL WE GET INTO ACTION!
AUSTRA

Chapter 2. BURKE'S PATROL

AS IT HAPPENED, THE MILITIA WERE GOING TO SEE ACTION SOONER THAN THEY EXPECTED, FOR AT THAT VERY MOMENT, PLANS WERE BEING LAID THAT AFFECTED THEM:

IT IS QUITE PLAIN, GENTLEMEN, THAT TO DEFEND AUSTRALIA WE MUST DEFEND NEW GUINEA. THE JAPANESE HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED BASES IN NORTHERN NEW GUINEA, AND ARE NOW SWEEPING SOUTH. THEY MUST BE STOPPED IN THE JUNGLES NEAR SUAI, AND MUST NEVER BE ALLOWED TO REACH PORT MORESBY.

AND THE MAIN TASK, GENERAL, WILL REST ON YOUR AUSTRALIANS!

SHORT OF MEN, THE AUSTRALIAN LEADERS HAD TO CALL HEAVILY ON THE MILITIA. FIVE DAYS LATER, A DRAFT OF FIFTY PICKED MEN LEFT DARWIN TO JOIN THE 91ST BATTALION AT SUAI, IN NEW GUINEA . . . AND JIM CLINTON AND SERGEANT LES BURKE WERE AMONGST THEM

AT [illegible] THE ENTIRE DRAFT WERE POSTED TO B COMPANY OF THE 9 ST AND AFTER TWO WEEKS OF CONCENTRATED JUNGLE FIGHTING TRAINING B COMPANY WERE SENT TO WATCH THE KIROOA ROAD CAPTAIN [illegible] BATES WAS THEIR COMMANDER AND SERGEANT BURKE KNEW HIM OF OLD
JUST OUR LUCK TO GET STUCK WITH A CAUTIOUS BLOKE LIKE CAPTAIN BATES IF WE SEE ANY FIGHTING UNDER HIM, IT'S THE JAPS WHO'LL HAVE TO START IT! I TELL YOU, BLUEY THE WAY TO FIGHT THIS JUNGLE WAR IS TO GET AFTER THE LITTLE YELLOW BEGGERS DON'T WAIT, BUT GET STUCK INTO 'EM!

HOWEVER EVENTS PLAYED RIGHT INTO THE TOUGH SERGEANT'S HANDS THE COMPANY HAD NOT BEEN ON THEIR OUTPOST POSITION MORE THAN TWO DAYS BEFORE CAPTAIN BATES SENT FOR SERGEANT BURKE
I WANT YOU TO TAKE TWENTY MEN ON PATROL, AND MOVE OUT AS FAR AS LEKKI CREEK, PATROL THE STRETCH BETWEEN THE CREEK AND TORIGA HILL. WE HAVEN'T ANY SIGNALLING EQUIPMENT ...SO YOU'LL HAVE TO DETAIL ONE MAN AS A RUNNER TO RETURN HERE SO THAT I CAN SEND HIM OUT AFTER YOU IF I WANT YOU
AUSTRALIA
YES SIR!

BURKE PROMPTLY PICKED OUT NINETEEN OF HIS CRONIES — ALL TOUGH AND EXPERIENCED BUSHMEN, IRON-JAWED AND STEELY-EYED. BUT WHEN HE ADDED JIM CLINTON TO MAKE UP THE NUMBER SOME OF THE OTHERS PROTESTED
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO PICK THAT BEEN POMMIE FOR, SARGE?
HIM? WHY, HE'S GOING TO BE OUR RUNNER OUR SOLE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH BATESY AND THE REST OF THE COMPANY

JACK MACKLIN LOOKED AT THE SERGEANT AS THOUGH HE HAD GONE OUT OF HIS MIND.
THAT POMMIE? WHY HE COULDN'T FIND HIS WAY ACROSS THE SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT WITHOUT LOSING HIS WAY!
I KNOW... THAT'S WHY I PICKED HIM!

THEN BURKE EXPLAINED . . .
IF WE SEND A RUNNER BACK TO THE COMPANY WHAT'S THE FIRST THING CAPTAIN BATES WILL USE HIM FOR? BEING BATESY, HE'LL WANT TO RECALL US THAT'S WHAT! BUT IF THAT POMMIE CAN'T FIND US AGAIN, . AND HE WON'T. . THEN WE SHAN'T GET THE MESSAGE, AND WE CAN STAY OUT ON OUR OWN HUNTING JAPS AND SNIPING AND RAISING CAIN BEHIND THEIR LINES!
THE SERGEANT'S RUSE WAS GREETED WITH GRIM CHUCKLES . . .
THAT'S THE TICKET, BURKEY! JAP HUNTING IS RIGHT UP OUR STREET!
TOO RIGHT! WE'LL FIGHT A PRIVATE WAR OF OUR OWN!
WITHIN TWO HOURS THE PATROL WAS ON ITS WAY . . .
THEY WERE HEAVILY LADEN WITH ENOUGH RATIONS IN THEIR PACKS TO LAST THEM SEVERAL DAYS FOR THE REST THEY MEANT TO LIVE OFF THE COUNTRY, AND STEAL FROM THE JAPS.

TWENTY FOUR HOURS LATER, THEY REACHED IEKKI CREEK, AND THE SERGEANT EXAMINED THE GROUND WITH A BUSHMAN'S KEEN EYE . . .
NO ONE'S BEEN ALONG THIS TRAIL FOR WEEKS WE'LL HAVE TO GO FARTHER YET IF WE WANT TO FIND ANY JAPS

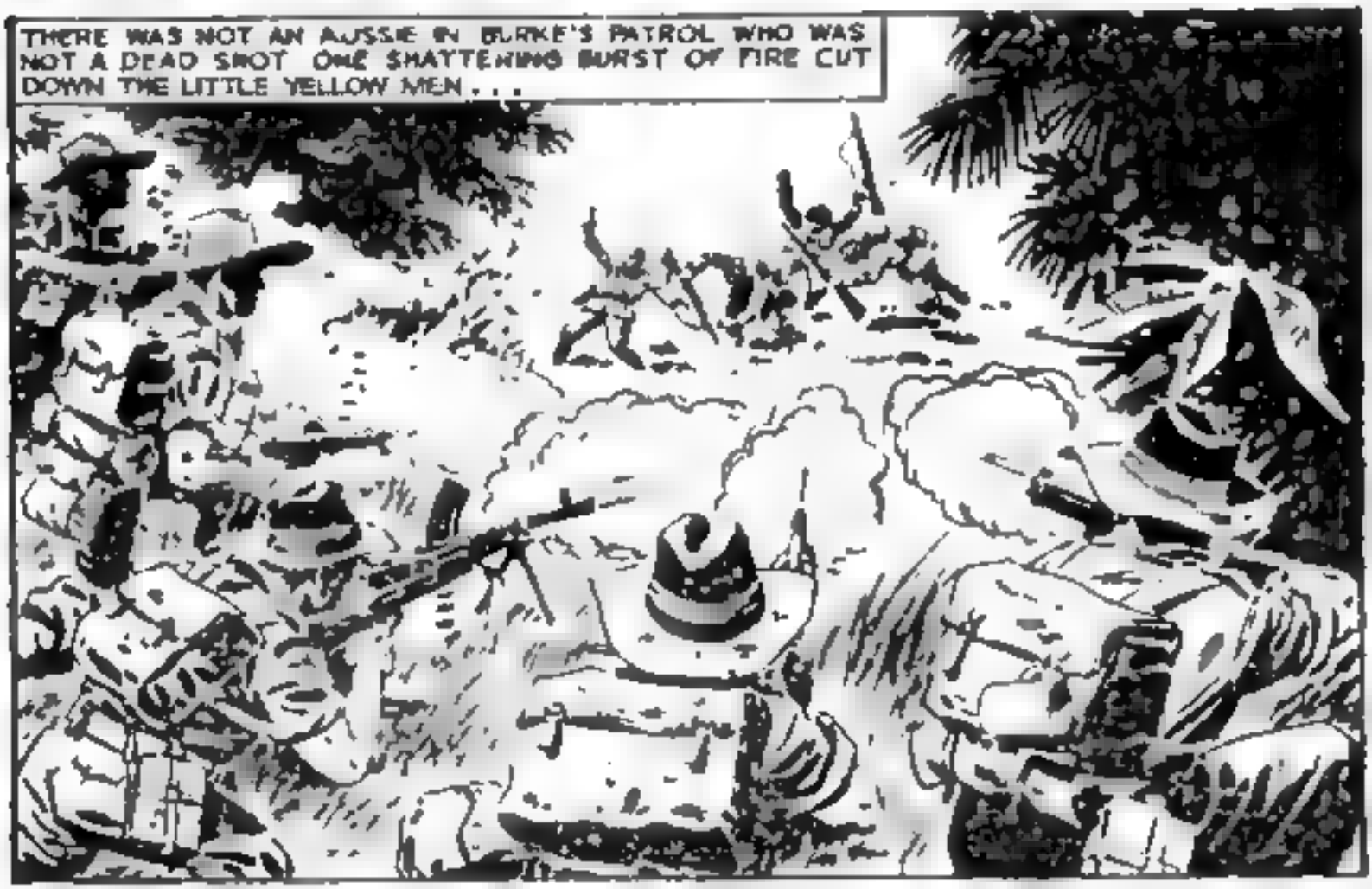
THE NEXT MORNING BURKE SENT JIM CLINTON BACK TO THE COMPANY.
THERE'S YOUR ROUTE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO BACK-TRACK BECAUSE WE LEFT PLENTY OF TRACKS ALL THE WAY TELL CAPTAIN BATES THERE'S NO SIGN OF JAPS YET, BUT THAT WE'LL KEEP A SHARP LOOKOUT
RIGHT, SARGE

A SNEER TWISTED LES BURKE'S MOUTH AS HE WATCHED THE ENGLISHMAN TRUDGE OFF ALONG THE SODDEN STEAMY TRAIL
THAT'S THE LAST WE'LL SEE OF HIM FOR SOME TIME! HE'LL BE LUCKY IF HE FINDS THE COMPANY LET ALONE FIND HIS WAY BACK HERE
BIT HARD ON HIM AIN'T YOU BLUEY? LOOKS LIKE A GAME BLOKE TO LIE EVEN IF HE'S GREEN

SERGEANT BURKE WHIRLED ON CORPORAL 'BLUEY' CAIN AN ANGRY GLINT IN HIS STEEL BLUE EYES
FROM NOW ON I'M GOING TO BE HARD ON EVERY BODY! SO IF YOU DON'T THINK THAT BECAUSE WE'RE ON OUR OWN AWAY FROM THE COMPANY THERE'LL BE NO DISCIPLINE WE'LL BE FIGHTING OUR OWN PRIVATE WAR, BUT I'M STILL THE SERGEANT AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT!

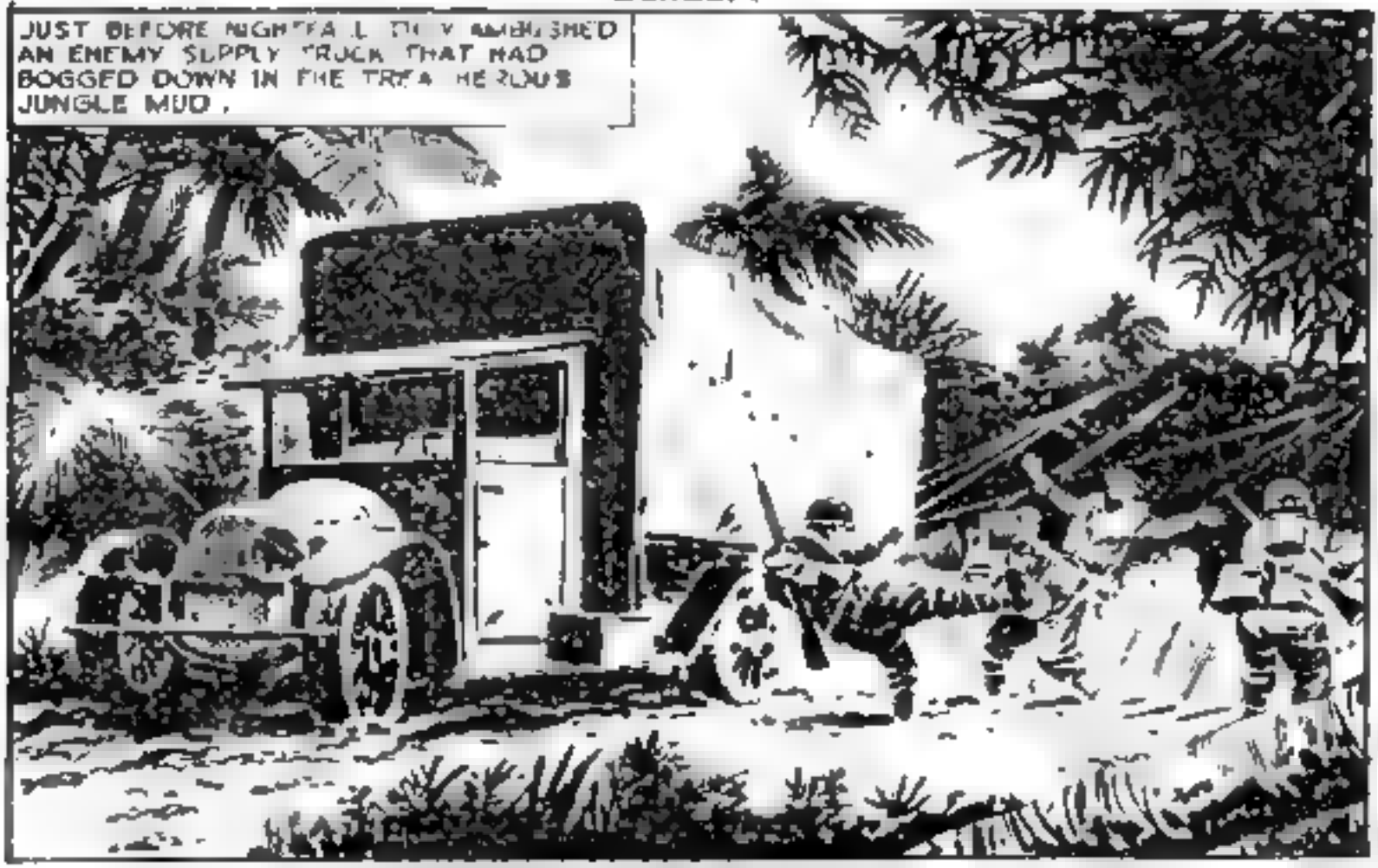
MEANWHILE, JIM WAS STRUGGLING THROUGH THE IMPLACABLE NEW GUINEA JUNGLE AND THIS TIME HE WAS ON HIS OWN WITH NO EXPERIENCED BUSHMEN TO BREAK TRAIL FOR HIM
BUT HE HAD PICKED OUT LANDMARKS ON THE OUTWARD JOURNEY AND THE TRACKS LEFT BY THE HEAVILY LADEN PATROL WERE PLAIN ENOUGH IN MANY PLACES.
HE REACHED CAMP SAFELY AND REPORTED TO CAPTAIN BATES AT COMPANY HEADQUARTERS . . .
HMM NO SIGN OF JAPS YET EH WELL, HOLD YOURSELF IN READINESS, CLINTON, I MAY HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU TO TAKE TO SERGEANT BURKE IN A DAY OR TWO

IN THE MEANTIME, SERGEANT BURKE AND HIS PATROL WERE PROBING FORWARD ON THEIR THIRD DAY, THEY CAUGHT SIGHT OF THEIR FIRST JAPANESE . . . AN OFFICER AND THREE MEN, APPARENTLY ON A SCOUTING MISSION AHEAD OF THE MAIN BODY.
WAIT FOR IT, BOYS . . . THE OFFICER IS MINE!


THERE WAS NOT AN AUSSIE IN BURKE'S PATROL WHO WAS NOT A DEAD SHOT. ONE SHATTERING BURST OF FIRE CUT DOWN THE LITTLE YELLOW MEN . . .

BUT THE WILY BATTLE HARDENED SERGEANT KNEW ENOUGH NOT TO STAY LONG IN ONE PLACE . .
COME ON WE'VE GOT TO KEEP ON THE MOVE! THE JAPS'LL BE HUNTING US FROM NOW ON SO KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED.

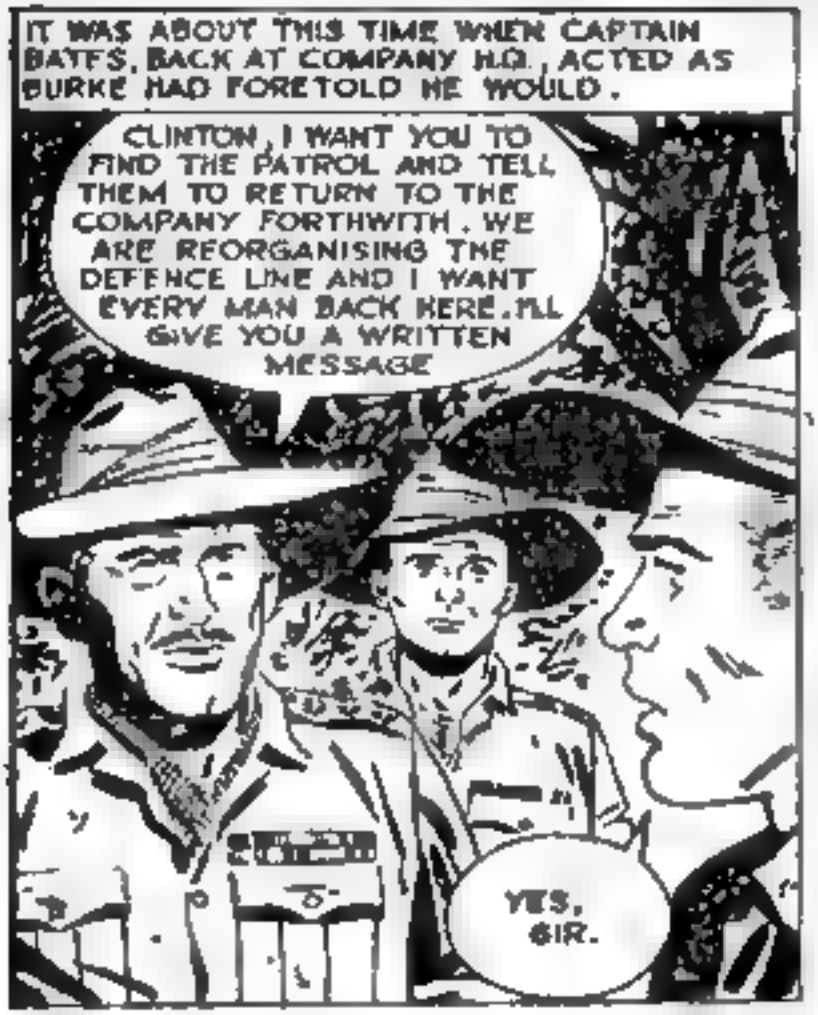
INSTEAD OF GOING BACK HOWEVER THE AUSSIES WENT FORWARD SLIPPING BETWEEN THE JAP OUTPOSTS LIKE THE BOLD RUTHLESS MAN-HUNTERS THEY WERE


JUST BEFORE NIGHTFALL THEY AMBUSHED AN ENEMY SUPPLY TRUCK THAT HAD BOGGED DOWN IN THE TREACHEROUS JUNGLE MUD.

LIKE HUNGRY WOLVES, THE AUSTRALIANS DESCENDED ON THE TRUCK
DON'T THINK MUCH OF THIS JAP TUCKER... IT'S MOSTLY TINNED FISH BUT IT'LL COME IN HANDY.
COME ON FOR PETE'S SAKE! GET A MOVE ON!

BY NOW THE JAPS WERE THOROUGHLY AROUSED AND AT A HURRIEDLY SUMMONED CONFERENCE NEXT MORNING, THE JAPANESE COLONEL IN COMMAND OF THE ADVANCED FORCES ISSUED ANGRY ORDERS . . .
CAPTAIN TAKODA IF YOU DO NOT SOON CATCH THESE WHITE DOGS WHO ARE RAIDING BEHIND OUR LINES I WILL COURT MARTIAL YOU ! GIVE YOU TWO DAYS!
I OBEY YOUR HONOURABLE COMMANDS SIR!

BUT THAT NIGHT A NEW UNEXPECTED ENEMY STRUCK AT THE AUSTRALIAN PATROL . . .
I'M FEELING PRETTY BAD, SARGE, BUT I CAN STICK IT OUT!
IT'S SWAMP FEVER! , BET IT'S THAT WATER WE DRANK THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST!
MAYBE WE WEREN'T SO CLEVER DODGING THOSE IMMUNISATION SHOTS IN DARWIN! WELL, WE'LL MOVE YOU BOYS BACK TO THAT CAVE WE FOUND YESTERDAY IT'S A BONZER HIDEOUT AND WE'LL MAKE IT OUR BASE


IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME WHEN CAPTAIN BATES, BACK AT COMPANY H.Q., ACTED AS BURKE HAD FORETOLD HE WOULD.
CLINTON, I WANT YOU TO FIND THE PATROL AND TELL THEM TO RETURN TO THE COMPANY FORTHWITH. WE ARE REORGANISING THE DEFENCE LINE AND I WANT EVERY MAN BACK HERE. I'LL GIVE YOU A WRITTEN MESSAGE
YES, SIR.

AS JIM WAS STARTING OFF ON HIS LONG TREK, THE QUARTERMASTER SERGEANT CALLED HIM BACK...
JUST A MINUTE, CLINTON. THE MAIL HAS JUST COME UP FROM THE COAST NOTHING FOR YOU... BUT THERE'S A TELEGRAM HERE FOR BURKEY. SENT FROM TOWNSVILLE TO DARWIN, AND THEN ON HERE. IT'LL BE OUT OF DATE BUT HE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE IT.
JIM PUT THE TELEGRAM IN HIS POCKET AND STARTED OFF.

HEAVY RAIN TURNED THE JUNGLE TRAIL INTO A QUAGMIRE BEFORE JIM HAD COVERED HALF THE DISTANCE, BUT IT CLEARED AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD BEGUN, AND BY THE FOLLOWING EVENING, HE SAW THE TWO TREES THAT STOOD LIKE SENTINELS NEAR THE SPOT WHERE HE HAD LEFT THE PATROL. FIGURES WERE MOVING BY THE CAMPING GROUND AND HE CALLED OUT TO THEM.
COO... OO...EE!

SUDDENLY THE FIGURES MOVED SWIFTLY INTO THE OPEN . . . AND JIM CAUGHT HIS BREATH IN SHOCK AND DISMAY . . .
JAPS!

HIS HEART THUDDING LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER AGAINST HIS RIBS, JIM DIVED BACK INTO COVER BEHIND HIM CAME EXCITED SHOUTS AS THE JAPS RUSHED AFTER HIM: THEN RIFLES AND AUTOMATICS CRACKED THE JUNGLE SILENCE AND BULLETS WHISTLED CLOSE, WHINING AND RICOCHETTING AMONGST THE TREES . . .

THE DARK SHADOWS OF A RAVINE OPENED UP BEFORE HIM. HE FLUNG HIMSELF INTO IT AND WENT SLIDING AND SCRAMBLING DOWN THE SLOPE IN THE SWIFT GATHERING DARKNESS. ANXIOUS TO LOSE HIMSELF IN THE NIGHT AND AS HE FLED QUESTIONS WERE HAMMERING IN HIS BRAIN

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE PATROL? HAVE THE JAPS CAPTURED THEM?

AND EVEN WHEN THE JAPS AT LENGTH GAVE UP THE PURSUIT, THE QUESTION WAS STILL WORRYING HIM.

BUT SERGEANT BURKE AND HIS MEN HAD NOT BEEN IN THEIR OLD CAMP FOR DAYS, AND AT THAT MOMENT THEY WERE TWO MILES BEHIND THE JAP OUTPOSTS, WAITING TO AMBUSH ANOTHER ENEMY SUPPLY TRUCK

WELL, LOOK AT THIS! YOU'D THINK THEY'D LEARN NOT TO SEND UNGUARDED VEHICLES ON THESE JUNGLE TRACKS.

WE'LL SHOW 'EM WHAT A FEW DINKUM AUSSIES CAN DO!

IT'S A SHAME TO TAKE THE MONEY!

AND A STORM OF
VINES AND BUSHES WHERE THE
A TRAP!

BURKE KNEW THAT IF THEY STAYED WHERE THEY WERE THE PATROL WOULD BE WIPED OUT, SO HE RASPED OUT AN ORDER HE HATED TO GIVE
COME ON, BOYS! WE GOT TO GET OUT . . . HOW MANY ARE HIT, BLUEY?
MULL AND DECKER HAVE HAD IT . . AND SO HAVE TWO OF THE OTHERS. BY THE LOOK OF IT THREE WOUNDED.

BUT THEN THE JAPS, OVER CONFIDENT, MADE THE FATAL MISTAKE OF LEAVING THE ARMOURED LORRY AND GOING IN PURSUIT OF THE AMBUSHERS IT WAS JUST WHAT BURKE AND HIS MEN WANTED!
GIVE IT TO THE LITTLE RATS!

CAUGHT IN THAT DEADLY ACCURATE FIRE, THE JAPS WAVERED. . AND THAT GAVE THE PATROL TIME TO GET CLEAR AWAY AN HOUR LATER THEY WERE BACK IN THEIR CAVE HIDEOUT. . .
MY HEAD IS SPLITTING WIDE OPEN, SARGE. . I RECKON I'VE GOT THE FEVER, TOO
I'VE HAD IT SINCE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, AND IT'S GETTING WORSE BUT HERE IS THE SAME RECKON WE'RE ALL GOING TO HAVE A DOSE OF IT, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO PUT UP WITH IT.

THE SHOOTING HAD NOT ONLY BEEN HEARD BY THE JAP OUTPOSTS JIM CLINTON HAD HEARD IT AND IT GAVE HIM A LOT TO THINK ABOUT!
I BET THAT'S BURKE AND THE BOYS! THERE AREN'T ANY OTHER TROOPS OF OURS AS FAR FORWARD AS THIS, AND HE WAS ALWAYS KEEN ON KEEPING THE JAPS ON THE HOP. THAT FIRING CAME FROM OVER THAT RIDGE IN FRONT.

MY ORDERS WERE TO FIND THE PATROL . SO I MIGHT AS WELL GET GOING!
DOGGEDLY, THE ENGLISHMAN HEADED IN THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THE FIRING HAD COME.

MORNING FOUND HIM ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE RIDGE. TWICE HE SAW JAPS MOVING IN THE DISTANCE AND CONVOYS PASSING ON A JUNGLE ROAD. THEN SOMETHING WHITE CAUGHT HIS EYE AND HE CAME UPON A VALUABLE CLUE . . .

'DIGGER' CIGARETTES! THAT PROVES THE PATROL HAS BEEN HERE!

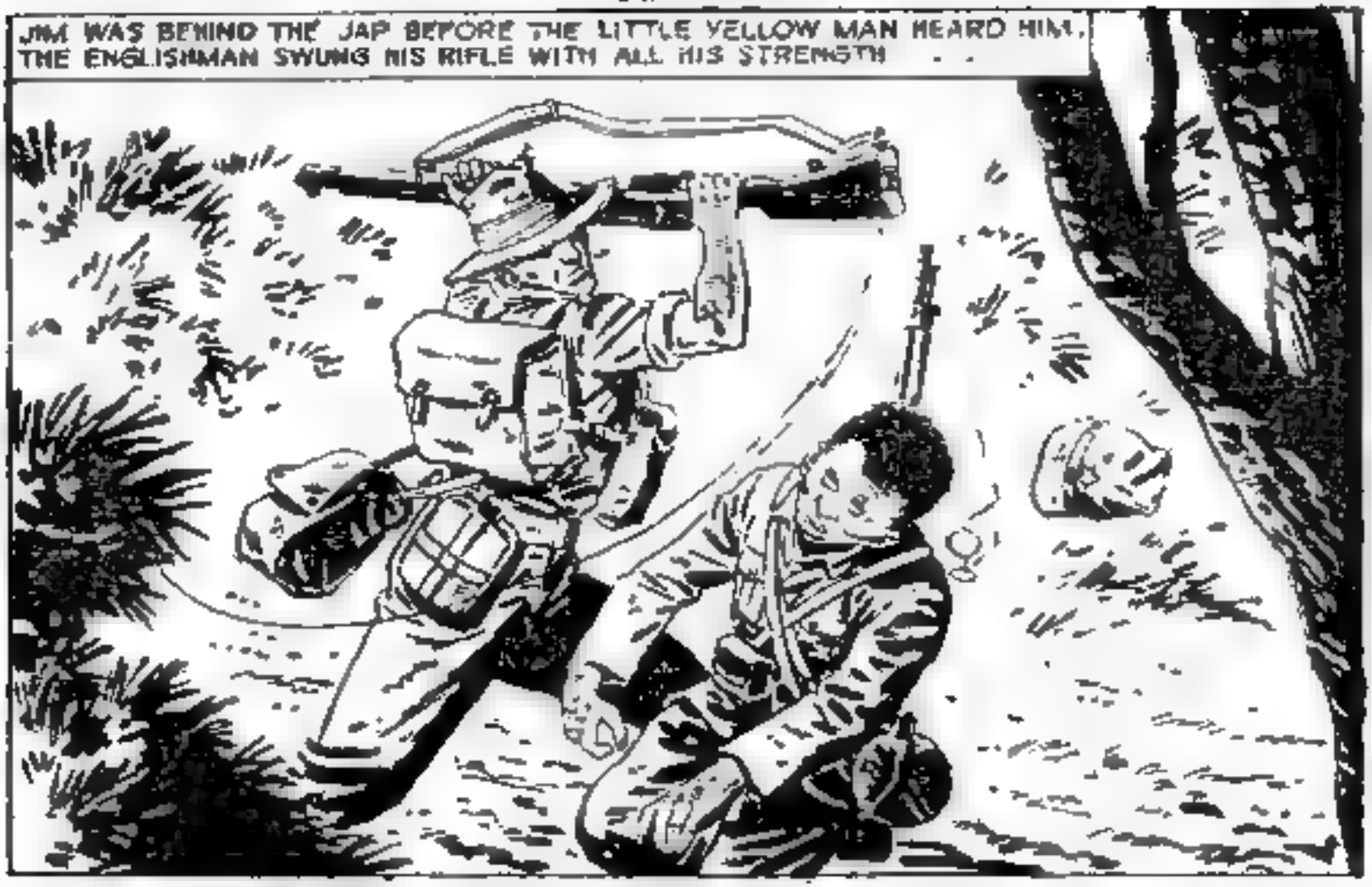
AUSTRALIA

JIM QUARTERED THE GROUND IN THE VICINITY, AND SOON CAME UPON FOOTPRINTS LEFT BY LARGE NOB NAILED BOOTS. IN THE SOFT EARTH, THE PRINTS WERE CLEAR ENOUGH.

THESE CERTAINLY WEREN'T MADE BY JAP FEET! I'VE ONLY GOT TO FOLLOW THEM AND SOONER OR LATER I'LL COME ON THE PATROL

THE ENGLISHMAN FOLLOWED THE TRACKS SLOWLY, PERHAPS, COMPARED WITH THE EASE WITH WHICH AN EXPERIENCED BUSHMAN WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED THEM, BUT WITH COMMON-SENSE AND VERY SILENTLY AND THUS IT WAS THAT HE CAME SUDDENLY UPON A JAP SCOUT . . .

HE'S FOUND THE TRACKS, TOO! AND HE'LL BE TELLING HIS PALS SOON . . . UNLESS I DO SOMETHING!

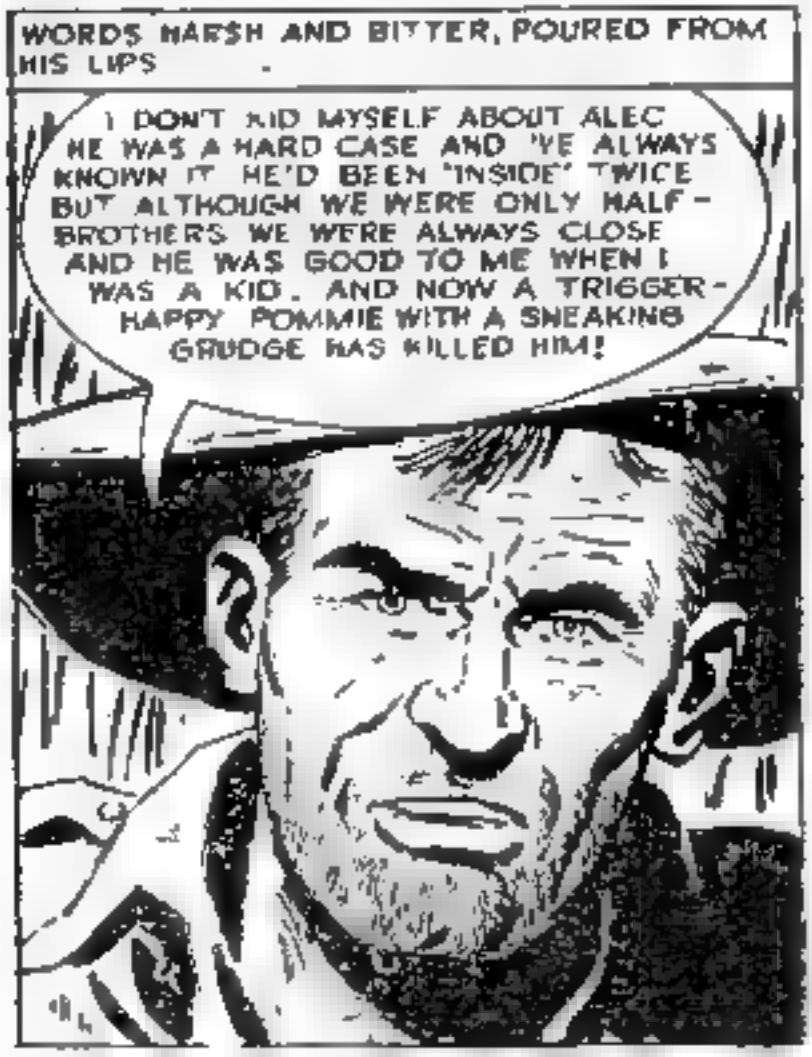

JIM WAS BEHIND THE JAP BEFORE THE LITTLE YELLOW MAN HEARD HIM. THE ENGLISHMAN SWUNG HIS RIFLE WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH . . .

WITH A HEART-STOPPING SHOCK, JIM FOUND THAT HE HAD KILLED HIS FIRST ENEMY. NOT TILL THAT MOMENT HAD HE FULLY REALISED THAT HE WAS IN A GRIM GAME WHERE YOU OBEYED THE SAVAGE LAW OF THE JUNGLE OR PERISHED.
HE'S DEAD!

AFTER HIDING THE LIMP FIGURE UNDER A WILD HIBISCUS, JIM WENT ON, FOLLOWING THE TRACKS EVEN MORE SILENTLY THAN BEFORE
I'VE COME A HECK OF A LONG WAY ALREADY WONDER HOW FAR OFF THEY ARE?
IT WAS SOME TIME LATER WHEN CORPORAL 'BUD' CARR, ON WATCH OUTSIDE THE CAVE MOUTH, GAVE A LOW WHISTLE OF ASTONISHMENT AND CALLED TO THE SERGEANT
LOOK WHO'S COMING, BURKEY!
THE POSSIBLE! WELL WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT? HE'S FOUND US! WAIT I'LL GO AND MEET HIM I DON'T WANT HIM TO LEAVE HIS CLUMSY GREAT FOOTPRINTS LEADING THE WAY UP TO OUR HIDEOUT

JIM GAVE A STARTLED EXCLAMATION WHEN SERGEANT BURKE SUDDENLY STEPPED OUT FROM BEHIND A TALL CLUMP OF KUNAI GRASS AND CONFRONTED HIM . . .
WHAT . . . SARGE, IT'S A GOOD JOB I FOUND YOU!
YEAH? WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT IT?
ORDERS FROM CAPTAIN BATES, SERGEANT, YOU'RE TO REJOIN THE COMPANY!
JUST LIKE THAT, EH? WELL, THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE SO EASY, POMMIE! I'VE GOT TWO MEN BADLY WOUNDED AND THE REST OF US ARE ROTTEN WITH FEVER WHAT'S MORE THE JAPS ARE ALL AROUND US

AFTER BURKE HAD READ THE ORDERS JIM HANDED HIM THE TELEGRAM AND WATCHED AS THE SERGEANT READ — SUDDENLY BURKE'S STEELY EYES LIFTED FROM THE PIECE OF PAPER AND MET JIM'S AND IN THEM WAS SUCH CONCENTRATED HATE THAT JIM TOOK A STEP BACKWARDS
— S FROM THE PADRE OF THE BASE HOSPITAL N TOWNSVILLE . . ALEC S DEAD! AND YOU KILLED HIM, CLINTON!
SICK WITH HORROR, JIM TRIED TO PROTEST, BUT BURKE INTERRUPTED HIM.

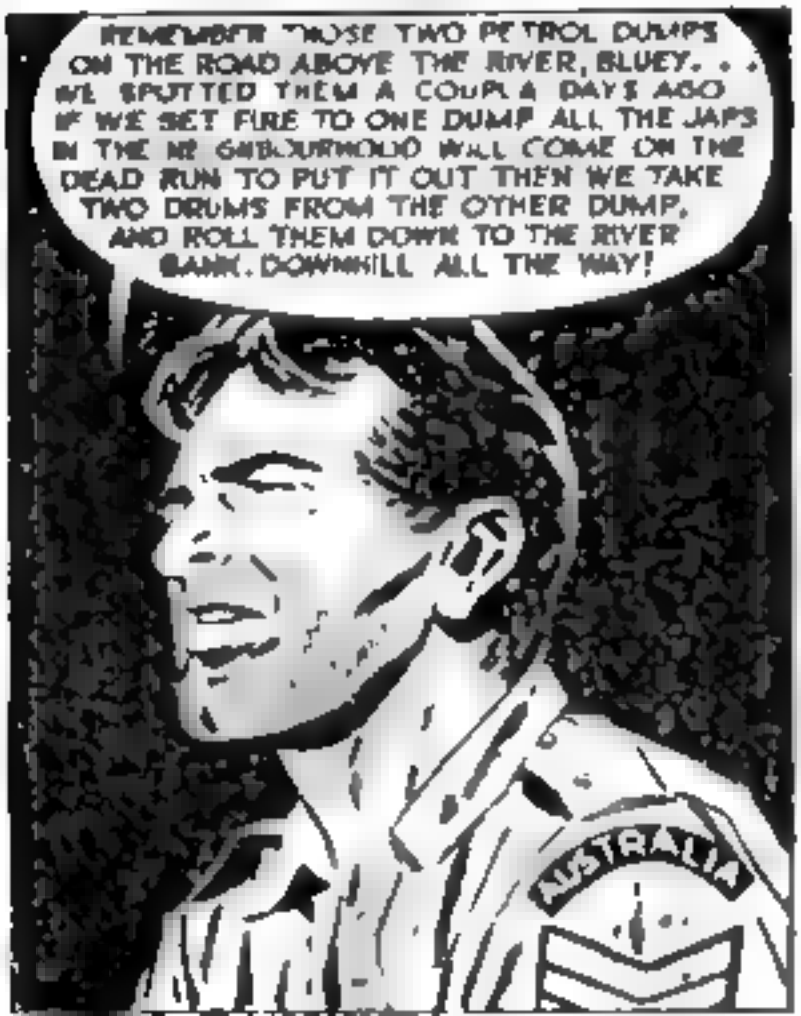

WORDS HARSH AND BITTER, POURED FROM HIS LIPS
I DON'T KID MYSELF ABOUT ALEC HE WAS A HARD CASE AND I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN IT HE'D BEEN 'INSIDE' TWICE BUT ALTHOUGH WE WERE ONLY HALF-BROTHERS WE WERE ALWAYS CLOSE AND HE WAS GOOD TO ME WHEN I WAS A KID. AND NOW A TRIGGER-HAPPY POMMIE WITH A SNEAKING GRUDGE HAS KILLED HIM!

THAT'S NOT TRUE! I NEVER KNEW HE WAS YOUR BROTHER TILL AFTERWARDS, AND ANYHOW, I MEANT TO MISS HIM AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE!
YOU KNEW WHO HE WAS ALL RIGHT! IT WAS MURDER . . . COLD-BLOODED MURDER. AND I'M NOT FORGETTING IT. YOU'LL PAY FOR IT, CLINTON! MY OATH, YOU'LL PAY!

Chapter 3 THE LAUNCH

A BOAT! LOOKS SEAWORTHY, TOO. IT MUST HAVE BELONGED TO THE PLANTATION WONDER WHAT THE ENGINE'S LIKE?
WELL WE'VE GOT AWAY BY LAND BECAUSE THERE AIN'T ONE OF YOU WHO COULD SWIM MORE THAN A COUPLE OF MILES BUT WE COULD SLIP DOWN RIVER AND OUT INTO THE OPEN SEA AND THEN ALONG THE COAST THE ENGINE IS OLD AND THERE'S A LOT OF WORK ON IT, BUT I THINK I COULD FIX IT
THERE'S SOMETHING IN WHAT HE SAYS, BURKEY!
YEAH! WE'LL SUNK ANYWAY WE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE A SHOT AT IT

AS A MECHANIC, JIM COULD SEE ALL THE SNAGS THAT LAY AHEAD OF HIM AND HE POINTED THEM OUT TO BURKE . .
THERE ARE PASSABLE TOOLS IN THE LOCKER, BUT I'LL ONLY BE ABLE TO WORK ON THE ENGINE IN DAYLIGHT AND I SHAN'T BE ABLE TO DO IT WITHOUT MAKING A BIT OF NOISE BUT THE BIGGEST SNAG OF ALL IS PETROL. WE NEED A DRUM AT LEAST. TWO DRUMS TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE.
THEN THAT MEANS WE'RE LICKED BEFORE WE START!
NO IT DOESN'T WE'LL GET PETROL FROM THE JAPS... SOMEHOW!


REMEMBER THOSE TWO PETROL DUMPS ON THE ROAD ABOVE THE RIVER, BLUEY. . . WE SPOTTED THEM A COUPLE DAYS AGO IF WE SET FIRE TO ONE DUMP ALL THE JAPS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WILL COME ON THE DEAD RUN TO PUT IT OUT THEN WE TAKE TWO DRUMS FROM THE OTHER DUMP, AND ROLL THEM DOWN TO THE RIVER BANK. DOWNHILL ALL THE WAY!
AUSTRALIA

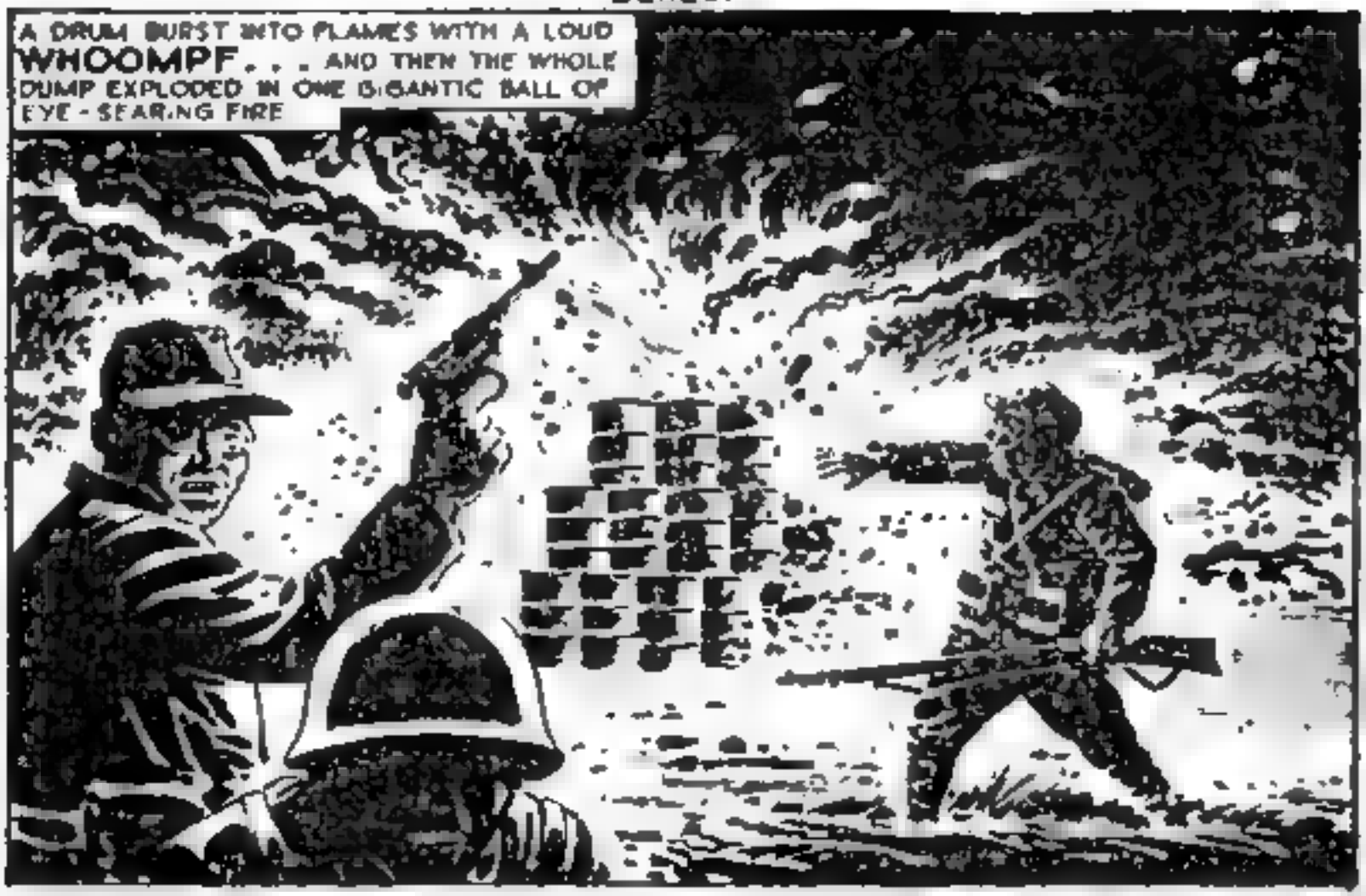
JUST BEFORE DAWN, JIM LEFT THE CAVE AND SLIPPED DOWN TO THE LAUNCH AND AS SOON AS IT WAS LIGHT ENOUGH HE SET TO WORK ON THE ENGINE WITH SWEAT RUNNING FROM HIM IN STREAMS HE TOILED ALL DAY IN THE PITILESS HEAT AND BY NIGHTFALL HE WAS FAIRLY WELL SATISFIED. . .
I RECKON IT'LL GO NOW BUT I CAN'T TRY IT OUT BEFOREHAND . . . THE SOUND OF THE ENGINE WOULD BRING THE JAPS FOR SURE.

THAT NIGHT JIM SET OUT TO GET THE PETROL AND GREASE AGAINST AND SMOKING WITH FEVER BUT STILL STRONGER THAN ANY OF THE OTHERS WENT WITH HIM, LEADING THE WAY
I'VE GOT TWENTY PER CENT TRACER AMMO IN THIS TOMMY GUN AND A FEW TRACERS SHOULD SET THIS DUMP ON FIRE 'LL GIVE YOU TIME TO REACH THE OTHER DUMP, CLINTON . . AND WHEN THE BIG BLAZE STARTS, YOU HOP IN AND GET THOSE TWO DRUMS
SURE YOU CAN TRUST A POMMIE, SARGE?
JIM COULD NOT HOLD BACK THE SARCASTIC DIG AT THE TOUGH AUSSIE.

BURKE'S ANSWER SNAPPED BACK LIKE THE CRACK OF A BULL-WHIP . . .
I'VE GOT TO TRUST YOU, HAVEN'T I? I NEVER THOUGHT I'D WANT HELP FROM A POMMIE . AND YOU DON'T NOW IF IT WASN'T FOR THIS FEVER! NOW . . . GET WEAVING!

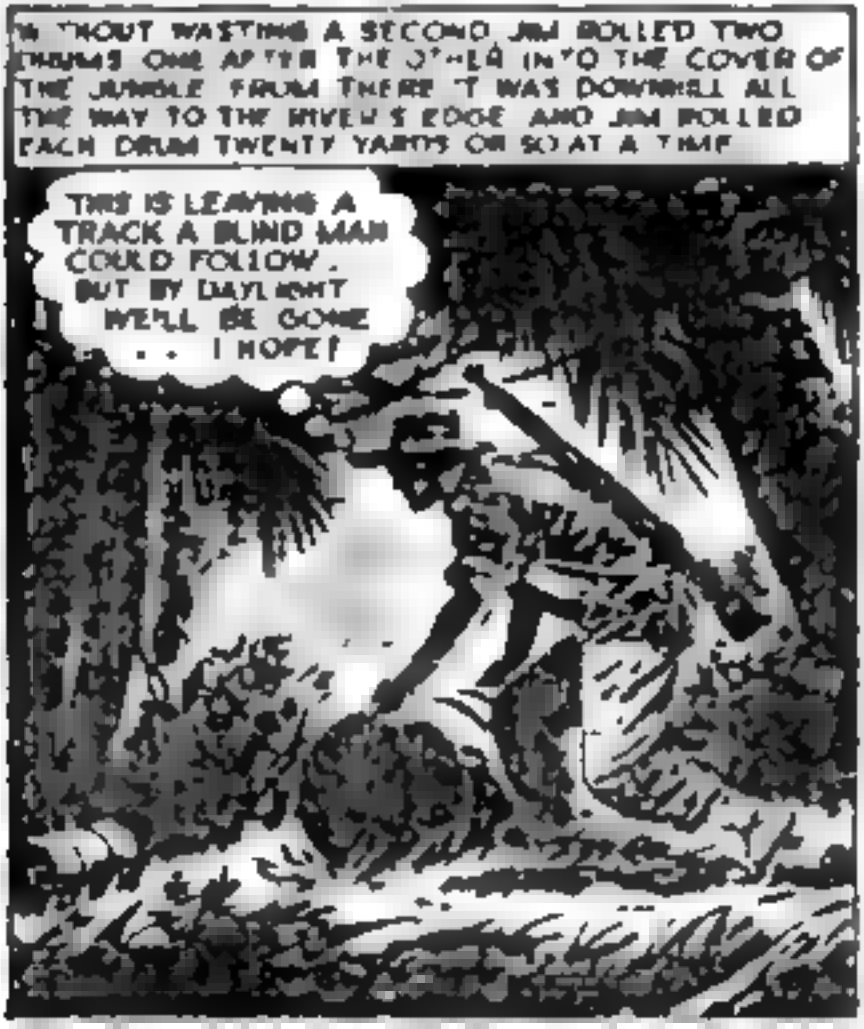
HATRED FOR THE ENGLISHMAN ROSE IN BURKE'S THROA . . E B . E .
BUT WITH IT THERE WAS A GRUDGING ADMIRATION
HE'S GOT GUTS I'LL SAY THAT FOR HIM! AND FOR THE SAKE OF THE OTHER BOYS, I'VE GOT TO LET HIM HANDLE THIS BUT WHY OUT OF ALL THE DAMNED ARMY DOES IT HAVE TO BE HIM!

WHEN HE JUDGED JIM HAD BEEN GIVEN ENOUGH TIME TO GET INTO POSITION, THE HARD-FACED AUSSIE SERGEANT SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER AND SENT A SCREAMING BURST OF TRACER PUNCHING INTO THE LOWER PETROL DRUMS . . .


A DRUM BURST INTO FLAMES WITH A LOUD WHOOMPF . . . AND THEN THE WHOLE DUMP EXPLODED IN ONE GIGANTIC BALL OF EYE-SEARING FIRE

BURKE'S PLAN WORKED FOR AS SOON AS THE FIRST DUMP WENT UP, ALL THE JAPS NEAR THE SECOND DUMP, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SENTRY, WENT RUSHING OFF TO HELP FIGHT THE FIRE AS SILENT AS A SHADOW JIM CREPT UP BEHIND THE SOLITARY GUARD LEFT . . .

JUNGLE WARFARE AS THE JAPS PLAYED IT WAS A GRIM GAME AND JIM CLINTON WAS LEARNING THE RULES . . . FAST!


WITHOUT WASTING A SECOND JIM ROLLED TWO DRUMS ONE AFTER THE OTHER INTO THE COVER OF THE JUNGLE FROM THERE IT WAS DOWNHILL ALL THE WAY TO THE RIVER'S EDGE AND JIM ROLLED EACH DRUM TWENTY YARDS OR SO AT A TIME
THIS IS LEAVING A TRACK A BLIND MAN COULD FOLLOW. BUT BY DAYLIGHT WE'LL BE GONE . . I HOPE!

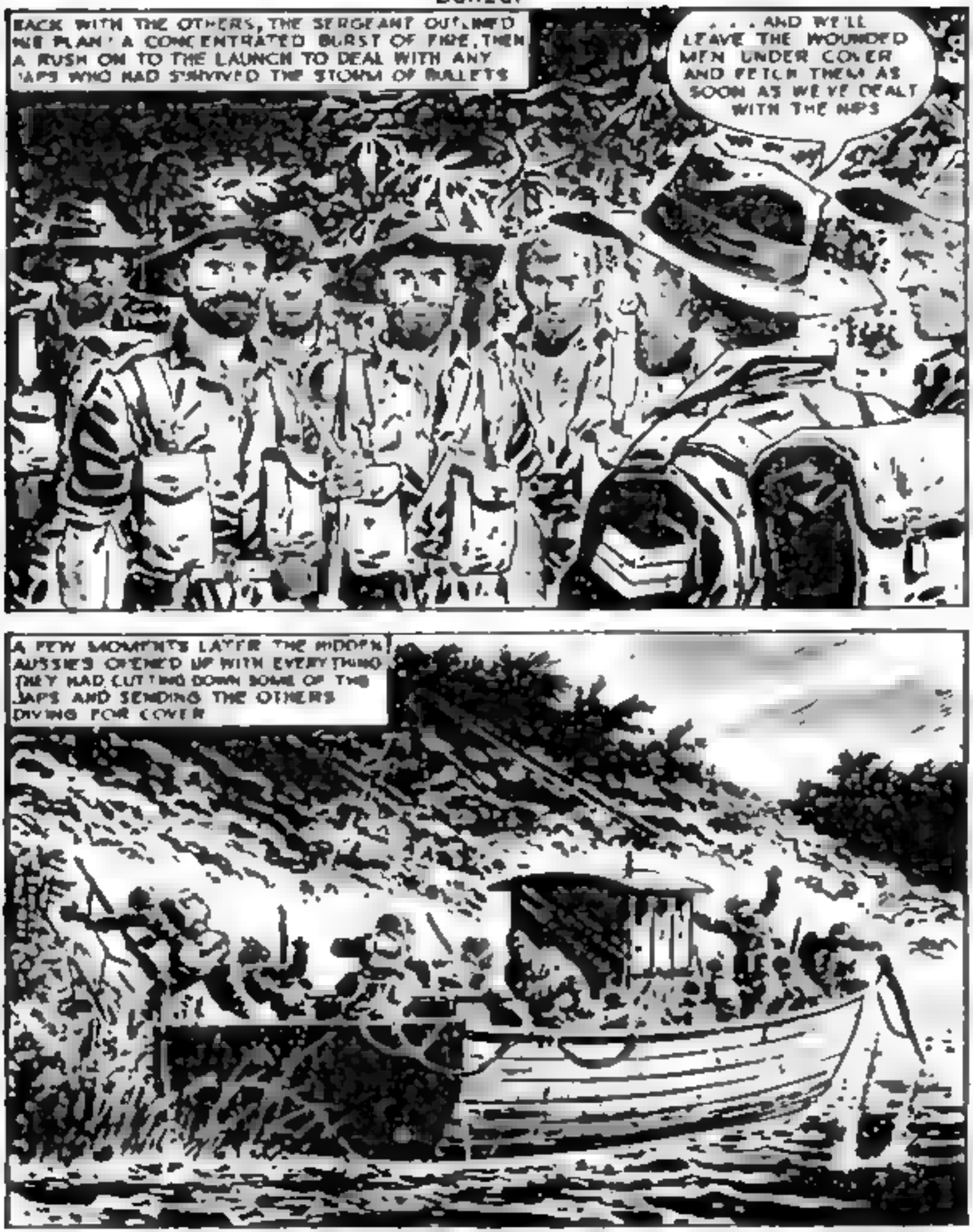
MEANWHILE SERGEANT BURKE, HIS TASK DONE WAS LOSING HIMSELF IN THE BLACK TANGLE OF THE JUNGLE AND HEADING, LIKE JIM, FOR THE RIVER BANK . . .
POMMIE MADE IT ALL RIGHT?

AUSTRALIAN AND [illegible] MET AT THE RIVER'S EDGE NOT FAR FROM THE WOODEN LAUNCH
SO YOU MANAGED IT THEN? DOES THIS MEAN YOU'RE READY TO START THAT BOAT?
I'M KEEPING MY FINGERS CROSSED BUT WITH ANY LUCK WE SHOULD BE ON OUR WAY DOWNRIVER BEFORE THE JAPS HAVE ANY KIND OF WHAT WE'RE UP TO

AS SOON AS THE PETROL DRUMS WERE SAFELY ON THE LAUNCH, JIM AND THE SERGEANT WENT BACK TO THE CAVE TO FETCH THE OTHERS AND SOON THE PARTY OF WOUNDED AND FEVER RACKED MEN WERE STUMBLING DOWN TOWARDS THE RIVER

JIM AC THE ONLY FF MAN LED THE WAY AND HE WAS APPROACHING THE CURTAIN OF REEDS WHEN HIGH-PITCHED VO CES FROM A LITTLE WAY AHEAD STOPPED HIM IN HIS TRACKS PEERING FORWARD HE CAUGHT THE GLEAM OF A FLASHLIGHT ON THE WATER AND HIS HEART WENT COLD
JAPS! THEY'VE FOUND THE LAUNCH!
HIS WHISPERED WARNING STOPPED THE FILE, AND THE AUSSIES FROZE NTO NUMBED STILLNESS.

WHILE THE OTHERS STAYED HIDDEN JIM AND BURKE CREPT FORWARD TO RECONNOITRE A JAP OFFICER AND SEVERAL MEN WERE SCRAMBLING ABOUT THE LAUNCH, CHATTERING LIKE EXCITED MONKEYS BUT INSTEAD OF GIVING WAY TO DESPAIR, BURKE GAVE A TWISTED GRIN. . .
THEY DON'T KNOW WE'RE HERE . . . AND THERE'S ENOUGH OF US TO SCUPPER THEM!


BACK WITH THE OTHERS, THE SERGEANT OUTLINED HIS PLAN: A CONCENTRATED BURST OF FIRE, THEN A RUSH ON TO THE LAUNCH TO DEAL WITH ANY JAPS WHO HAD SURVIVED THE STORM OF BULLETS
. . . AND WE'LL LEAVE THE WOUNDED MEN UNDER COVER AND FETCH THEM AS SOON AS WE'VE DEALT WITH THE NIPS
A FEW MOMENTS LATER THE HIDDEN AUSSIES OPENED UP WITH EVERYTHING THEY HAD, CUTTING DOWN SOME OF THE JAPS AND SENDING THE OTHERS DIVING FOR COVER

THEN THE PATROL RUSHED FORWARD. MANY OF THEM STAGGERING WEAKLY THEY SCRAMBLED ABOARD AND BLASTED THE CORNERED JAPS AT POINT BLANK RANGE . . .

WITH ALL RESISTANCE SOON OVER JIM WENT STRAIGHT TO THE ENGINE AND SWUNG THE STARTING HANDLE THREE TIMES HE TRIED . . . THEN THE ENGINE COUGHED, SPLUTTERED AND STARTED TO POUND STEADILY. A GUSTY SIGH OF RELIEF BROKE FROM THE ENGLISHMAN
THANK HEAVENS FOR THAT!

AS SOON AS THE WOUNDED MEN WERE SAFELY ABOARD JIM SWUNG THE LAUNCH OUT INTO MIDSTREAM AS HE DID SO, SOMETHING MOVED IN THE DEEP SHADOWS AT THE STERN AND THE JAP OFFICER WHO HAD BEEN SHAMMING DEAD, CAME TO HIS FEET. A CRY OF WARNING BURST FROM THE SERGEANT
LOOK OUT, POMMIE!

JIM SPUN ROUND SAW THE LEVELLED REVOLVER, AND INSTINCTIVELY SNATCHED UP A SPANNER. AS HE BRACED HIMSELF FOR THE SHOCK OF THE BULLET, BURKE LUNGED FORWARD KNOCKING THE FANATICAL ORIENTAL OFF HIS BALANCE.

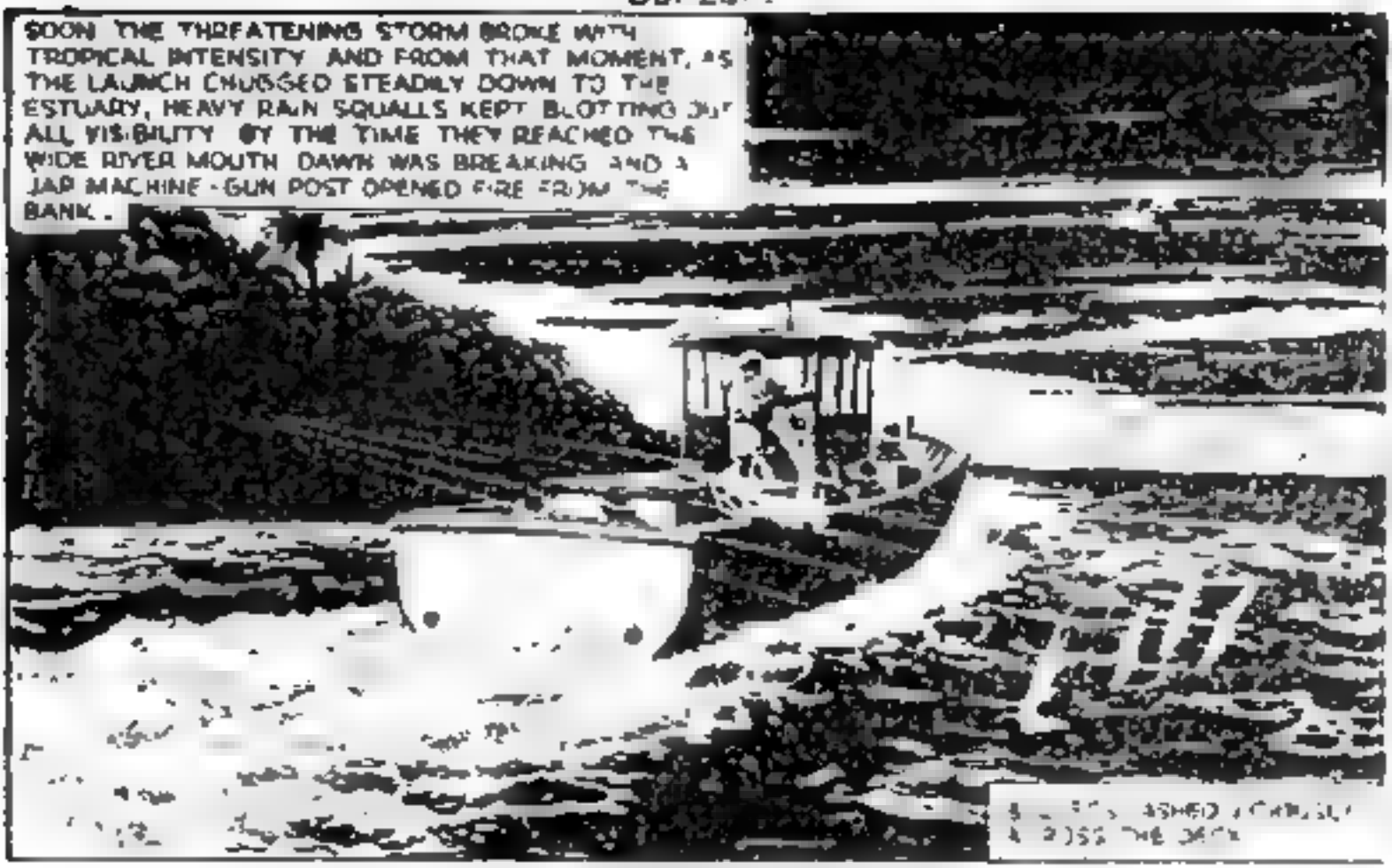
BEFORE THE OFFICER COULD RECOVER HIS BALANCE, A SAVAGE BLOW SENT HIM PLUNGING INTO THE DARK WATERS...

JIM TURNED TO BURKE IN GRATITUDE, FOR THE SERGEANT HAD PLAINLY BEEN READY TO TAKE THE BULLET MEANT FOR JIM...

THANKS, SARGE! YOU SAVED MY BACON THEN— AND IT'S A MIRACLE HE DIDN'T BLOW YOUR BRAINS OUT!

DON'T THANK ME, POMMIE. THIS JUST SQUARES OUR ACCOUNT AND I DON'T OWE YOU A DARN THING ANY MORE. THAT'S ALL I WANTED

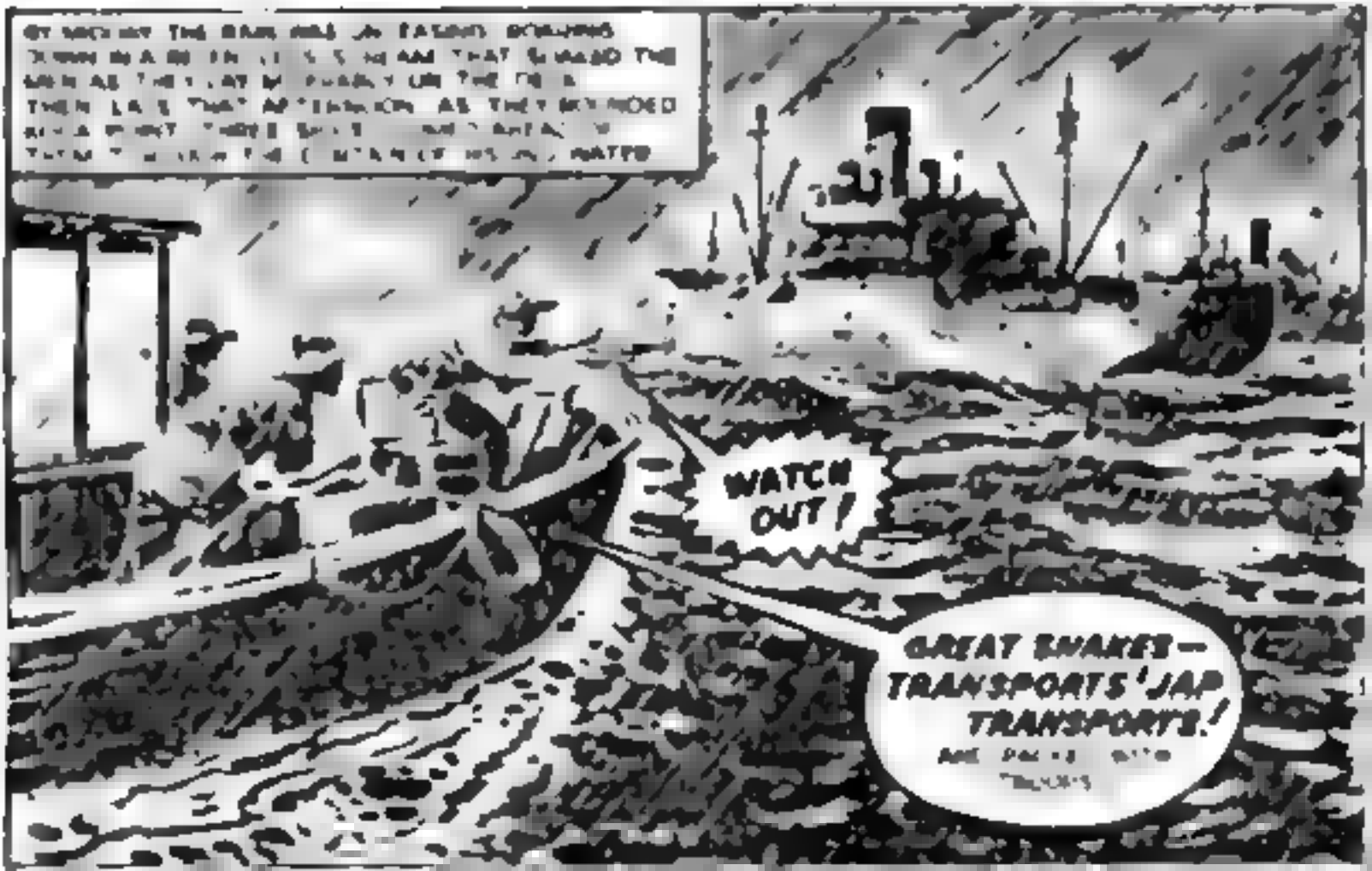
THERE WAS RASPING BITTERNESS IN BURKE'S VOICE.

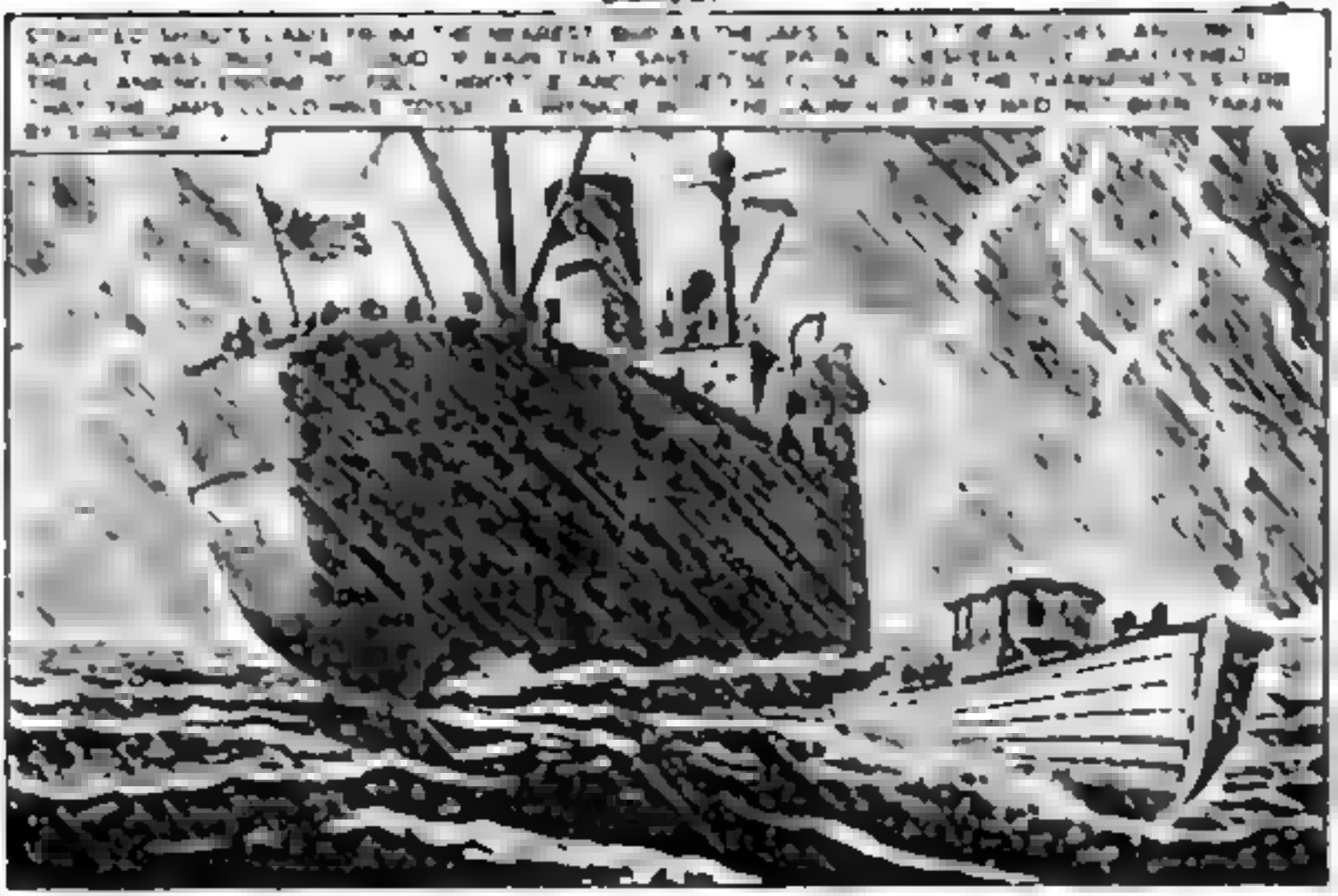

SOON THE THREATENING STORM BROKE WITH TROPICAL INTENSITY AND FROM THAT MOMENT, AS THE LAUNCH CHUGGED STEADILY DOWN TO THE ESTUARY, HEAVY RAIN SQUALLS KEPT BLOTTING OUT ALL VISIBILITY. BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE WIDE RIVER MOUTH DAWN WAS BREAKING AND A JAP MACHINE-GUN POST OPENED FIRE FROM THE BANK.

THE SUDDEN SMASHING IMPACT OF A BULLET BROUGHT A CRY OF AGONY FROM JIM AND HE SAGGED OVER THE WHEEL AND NEARLY FELL. BUT WITH GRITTED TEETH HE STEERED THE LAUNCH INTO THE WELCOME CURTAIN OF RAIN THAT HID THEM FROM THE JAPS..
YOU HIT, CLINTON?

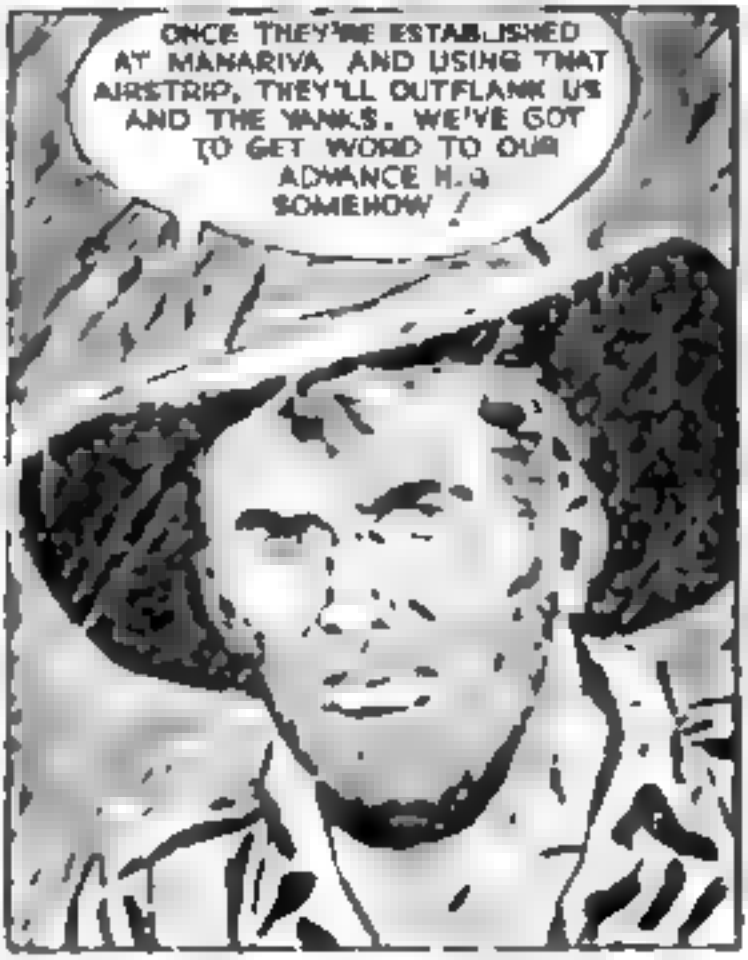
MY WORD! IT'S SMASHED YOUR KNEE PRETTY BADLY! I'LL BE ALL RIGHT

BETWEEN THE RAIN SQUALLS JIM WATCHED THE MANGROVE FRINGED AND SWAMPY COASTLINE, KEEPING AS CLOSE IN AS HE DARED. IN THE MEANTIME SHORT STUDIED A MAP HE BROUGHT FROM HIS HAVERSACK.
WE CAN'T LAND WHERE THERE'S A MANGROVE SWAMP, AND THE ONLY PLACE WE CAN GET INLAND IS AT MANARIVA BAY. THERE'S A CAUSEWAY THERE THAT RUNS TO THE EDGE OF A BIG PLANTATION. BUT WE'VE GOT A LONG WAY TO GO!


WATCH OUT!
GREAT SNAKES— TRANSPORTS! JAP TRANSPORTS!



ANCHORED SHIPS.
YOU KNOW WHAT THOSE TRANSPORTS MEAN, BOYS? THE
ALONG THIS COAST AND MY GUESS IS THAT THEY'LL DO IT AT THE PLACE WE'RE HEADING FOR — MANARIVA BAY. THEY CAN'T LAND IN THE SWAMPS, BUT BEHIND MANARIVA THERE'S HIGH GROUND AND AN AIRSTRIP.


ONCE THEY'RE ESTABLISHED AT MANARIVA AND USING THAT AIRSTRIP, THEY'LL OUTFLANK US AND THE YANKS. WE'VE GOT TO GET WORD TO OUR ADVANCE H.Q SOMEHOW!

Chapter 4. BATTLE of the CAUSEWAY

SOON AFTER NIGHTFALL THE RAIN STOPPED BUT BY THEN JIM WAS ALMOST COLLAPSING FROM WANT OF SLEEP AND LOSS OF BLOOD SO BURKE AND 'BLUEY' CAIN SPELLED HIM AT THE WHEEL. BUT WHENEVER THE ENGINE FALTERED, IT WAS JIM THEY LOOKED TO FOR HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD KEEP IT GOING IT WAS DAWN BEFORE THEY REACHED MANARA BAY.

ONCE HIS PATROL WAS ASHORE BURKE OPENED THE LAUNCH'S SEA-COCK AND SANK HER IN THE CHANNEL AT THE END OF THE JETTY. . .

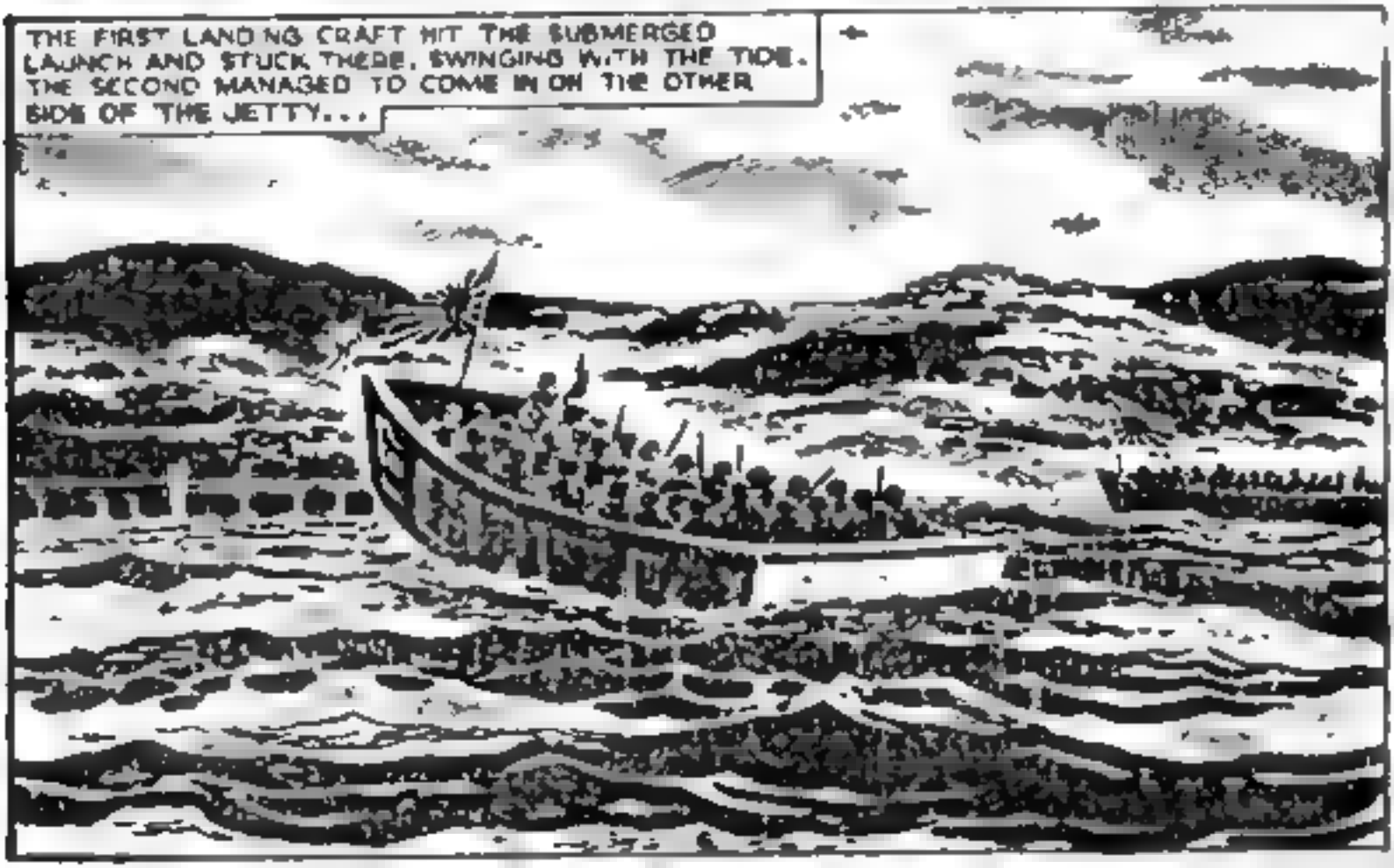
JUST TO MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE NIPS WHEN THEY ARRIVE! NOW THEY'LL HAVE A HECK OF A TIME BRINGING CRAFT ALONGSIDE THE JETTY.

WEARILY THE AUSSIES STUMBLED ALONG THE CAUSEWAY TOWARDS DRY LAND AND THIS TIME, JIM WAS AMONGST THE MEN WHO HAD TO BE HELPED. . .

WHILST THE AUSSIES DUG SLIT TRENCHES COVERING THE CAUSEWAY WELL SITED AND WELL HIDDEN, THE SERGEANT LOOKED AROUND FOR THE FITTEST MAN. HE CHOSE 'BLUEY' CAIN . . .
F YOU KEEP ALONG THAT ROAD, BLUE, YOU'RE SURE TO COME TO OUR OUTPOSTS SOONER OR LATER. REPORT THOSE JAP TRANSPORTS. TELL THEM THAT IF THE JAPS TRY TO LAND, WE'LL DELAY 'EM AS LONG AS POSSIBLE BUT WE'RE GOIN TO NEED HELP — QUICK!

AS THE CORPORAL STARTED OUT, ONE OF THE AUSSIES GAVE A SARDONIC LAUGH . . .
WE'VE GOT EIGHT UNWOUNDED MEN, SARGE — AND WE'RE ALL HALF DEAD WITH FEVER YOU THINK WE CAN HOLD ALL THOSE JAPS ON OUR OWN?
TOO RIGHT AND DO YOU KNOW WHY, SNOWY? THEY'VE GOT TO COME ALONG THAT CAUSEWAY — IT'S THE ONLY SOLID GROUND. IT'S SO NARROW THEY'LL ALL BE BUNCHED TOGETHER — AND WE'LL BE ABLE TO GIVE 'EM HELL

SNATCHING WHAT REST THEY COULD, THE SMALL BAND OF DETERMINED MEN WAITED FOR THE JAPS. BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE FOLLOWING DAWN THAT THE ENEMY TRANSPORTS SLID ROUND THE POINT AND ANCHORED IN THE BAY. SOON, THE FIRST LANDING CRAFT WERE HEADING FOR THE JETTY...
THIS IS IT BOYS — AND REMEMBER, YOU CAN ONLY DIE ONCE!


THE FIRST LANDING CRAFT HIT THE SUBMERGED LAUNCH AND STUCK THERE, SWINGING WITH THE TIDE. THE SECOND MANAGED TO COME IN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JETTY...

THE TROOPS FROM THE SECOND CRAFT WERE ON THE JETTY, FORMED UP AND MARCHING FORWARD WHEN A TERRIBLE BURST OF FIRE FROM THE SHORE CUT A CRIMSON SWATHE IN THEIR CLOSE RANKS...

THE SHOCK OF THAT VICIOUS FUSILLADE OF DEATH FROM A BEACH THEY THOUGHT UNDEFENDED, CHECKED THE ENEMY. BUT THE SURVIVORS, REINFORCED FROM THE OTHER LANDING CRAFT, PUSHED FORWARD AGAIN. THEY DID NOT GAIN A YARD...

THAT'S THE TICKET, BOYS! BUT DON'T WASTE THE AMMO!

SOON MORE LANDING CRAFT WERE CLUSTERING OFF THE END OF THE JETTY. SOME TRIED TO FORCE A WAY IN THROUGH THE MANGROVES BUT BECAME HOPELESSLY STUCK IN THE TOUGH GNARLED ROOTS . . .

ON ONE OF THE TRANSPORTS GENERAL KIMOTO COMMANDING THE LANDING FORCE, RAGED AT THE DELAY . . .
PAH! EXCUSES, EXCUSES! A MISERABLE HANDFUL OF THE ACCURSED AUSTRALIANS WILL RUIN THE WHOLE OPERATION. ANOTHER SHALL COMMAND THE THIRD BATTALION OF THE MITSURI BRIGADE IN THE NEXT ATTACK!
SIR, I SHALL HAVE JOY IN DYING FOR THE EMPEROR IF IT IS YOUR WISH.

THE FANATICAL ORIENTALS SURGED ALONG THE CAUSEWAY AGAIN DISREGARDING THEIR APPALLING LOSSES. BUT AGAIN FLESH AND BLOOD COULD NOT STAND AGAINST THE DEADLY SHOOTING OF THE AUSTRALIANS.
BANZAI!
BANZAI!

IN DESPERATION SOME OF THE ENEMY PLUNGED INTO THE BLACK WATERS OF THE MANGROVE SWAMP AND TRIED TO WADE ASHORE . . .
BUT THE SLIME SUCKED MANY DOWN, AND THOSE THAT DID NOT DROWN WERE PICKED OFF ONE BY ONE . . .

SOON THE AUSSIES SAW A LOW GREY SHAPE SLIDE AROUND THE POINT. AT SIGHT OF IT, SERGEANT BURKE'S MOUTH TIGHTENED GRIMLY. . .
A JAP DESTROYER! NOW THE WAR'S GOIN' TO GET REALLY TOUGH!

AS SOON AS THE SMOKE CLEARS, THEY'LL BE ON TOP OF US. WATCH IT, BOYS!

STICK IT OUT, BOYS!

DEFEAT STARED THE AUSTRALIANS IN THE FACE. BURKE HAD BEEN HIT IN THE SHOULDER BY A SHELL SPLINTER AND HIS TOMMY-GUN WAS EMPTY. THE SURVIVING JAPS OF THE NEW ASSAULT WAVE WERE ALMOST ON HIM . . .

TOO MANY OF 'EM! WE-D!D OUR BEST!

DEATH STARED THE SERGEANT IN THE FACE — AND THEN THE SUDDEN DEAFENING CLATTER OF A BREN SPLIT THE AIR. THE JAPS CRUMPLED TO THE GROUND FROM THAT DEADLY BURST AT POINT-BLANK RANGE. BURKE TURNED — AND THERE WAS JIM CLINTON, FIRING FROM THE HIP!

WELL, WHAT DO YER KNOW! THE GOOD OLD POMMIE!

AGAIN THE JAPANESE ATTACK MELTED AWAY. RACKED BY THE FLAMING AGONY OF HIS SHATTERED KNEE, THE ENGLISHMAN STUMBLED AND FELL INTO THE TRENCH ALONGSIDE THE TOUGH AUSSIE.

STEADY, LAD! BY JIMINY YOU'RE AS GAME A FIGHTER AS I'VE EVER SEEN — AND I'VE SEEN PLENTY

JIM LOOKED UP AT BURKE AND HIS VOICE SOUNDED STRAINED WITH SINCERITY

SARGE, THERE'LL BE ANOTHER ATTACK SOON. THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE TIME LEFT FOR EITHER OF US. ONE LAST THING — I SWEAR NEVER SHOT YOUR BROTHER ON PURPOSE!

COBBER — BELIEVE YOU DEEP INSIDE. BELIEVED YOU ALL THE TIME AND [illegible]

AND EVEN AS JIM DID SO A NEW SOUND BROUGHT A SUDDEN SPURT OF HOPE TO THE WEARY DEFENDERS FROM SOMEWHERE INLAND THREE BEAUFIGHTERS WHISTLED DOWN LOW AND CIRCLED THE DESTROYER HEEDLESS OF THE FLAK THAT ROSE TO MEET THEM

TORPEDOES GLISTENED IN THE SUN AS THE 'TINFISH' DROPPED FROM THE BEAUFIGHTERS ONE STRUCK THE DESTROYER FORWARD. THE SECOND MISSED. BUT THE THIRD SPED STRAIGHT AND TRUE FOR THE SHIP'S VITALS. A SHEET OF FLAME SHOT SKYWARD AND WITH A TREMENDOUS ROAR, THE DESTROYER WAS RENT ASUNDER . . .

BUT THIS WAS NOT ALL, FOR A CRACKED, HYSTERICAL SHOUT WAS COMING FROM ONE OF THE BADLY WOUNDED AUSSIES.
REINFORCEMENTS! LOOK AT 'EM COMING! SARGE — LOOK — BEHIND YOU!

THE NEWCOMERS WERE NOT MILITIAMEN, BUT TOUGH, SEASONED WARRIORS OF THE 8TH DIVISION, A.I.F., WHO HAD FOUGHT THE GERMANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND WERE NOW THIRSTING FOR A CRACK AT THE JAPS.
HEY DIGGERS, WHERE'S THE WAR?

IN THE NEXT HOUR, THE JAPANESE LAUNCHED THREE MORE ATTACKS BUT THE POSITION WAS FIRMLY IN THE HANDS OF FRESH INFANTRY, BACKED UP BY ARTILLERY AND PLANES. THE ATTACKS WERE REPULSED IN BLOODY CHAOS.
DENIED THE AIRSTRIP, THE WHOLE ENEMY OFFENSIVE DISSOLVED IN RUIN DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND NEVER AGAIN DID THE JAPANESE GET AS CLOSE TO AUSTRALIA.

JIM, SERGEANT BURKE, AND THE REST OF THE WOUNDED WERE FLOWN BACK TO HOSPITAL IN TOWNSVILLE. IT WAS THERE, SOME DAYS LATER, THAT BURKE CAME TO JIM WITH NEWS THAT LIFTED A BLACK CLOUD THAT STILL PERSISTED ON THE ENGLISHMAN'S MIND...

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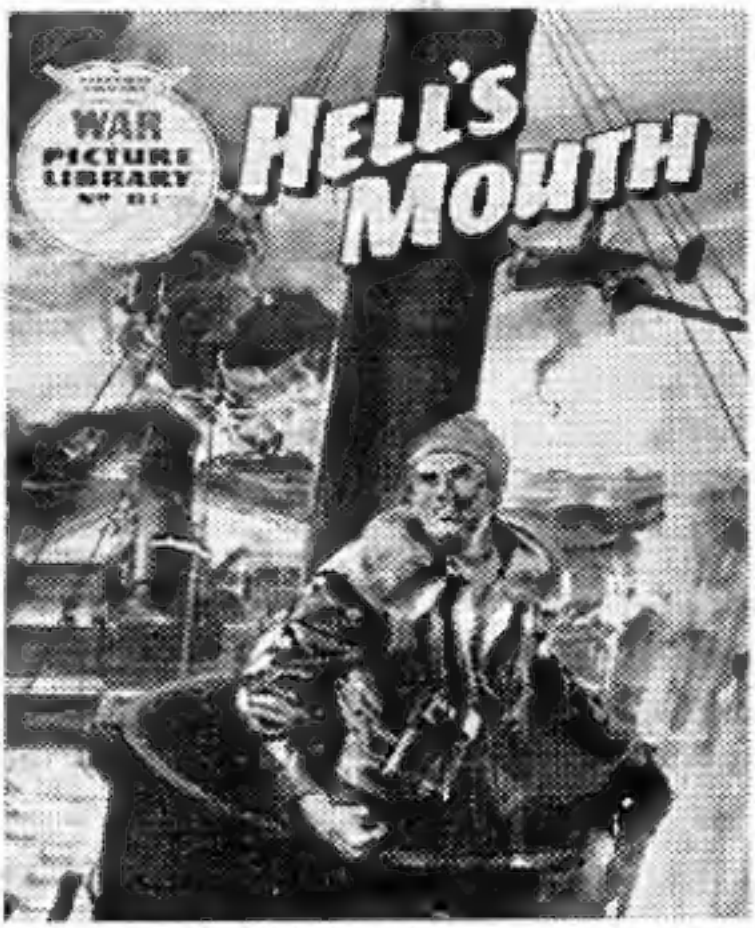
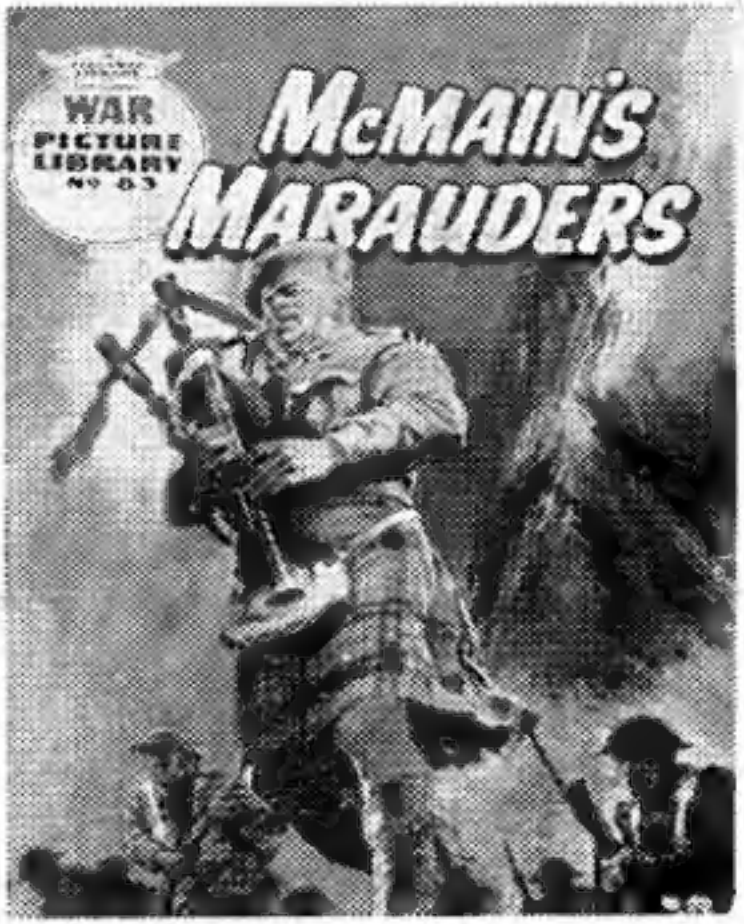


The two ships fought their way into the teeth of the German blockade as they carried desperately-needed arms to the Fighting French.

No. 83—McMAIN'S MARAUDERS



When the Marauders stormed Hellfire Ridge in Italy, they were close to writing the last blood-stained chapters in their proud military history.

ALSO ON SALE NOW :—

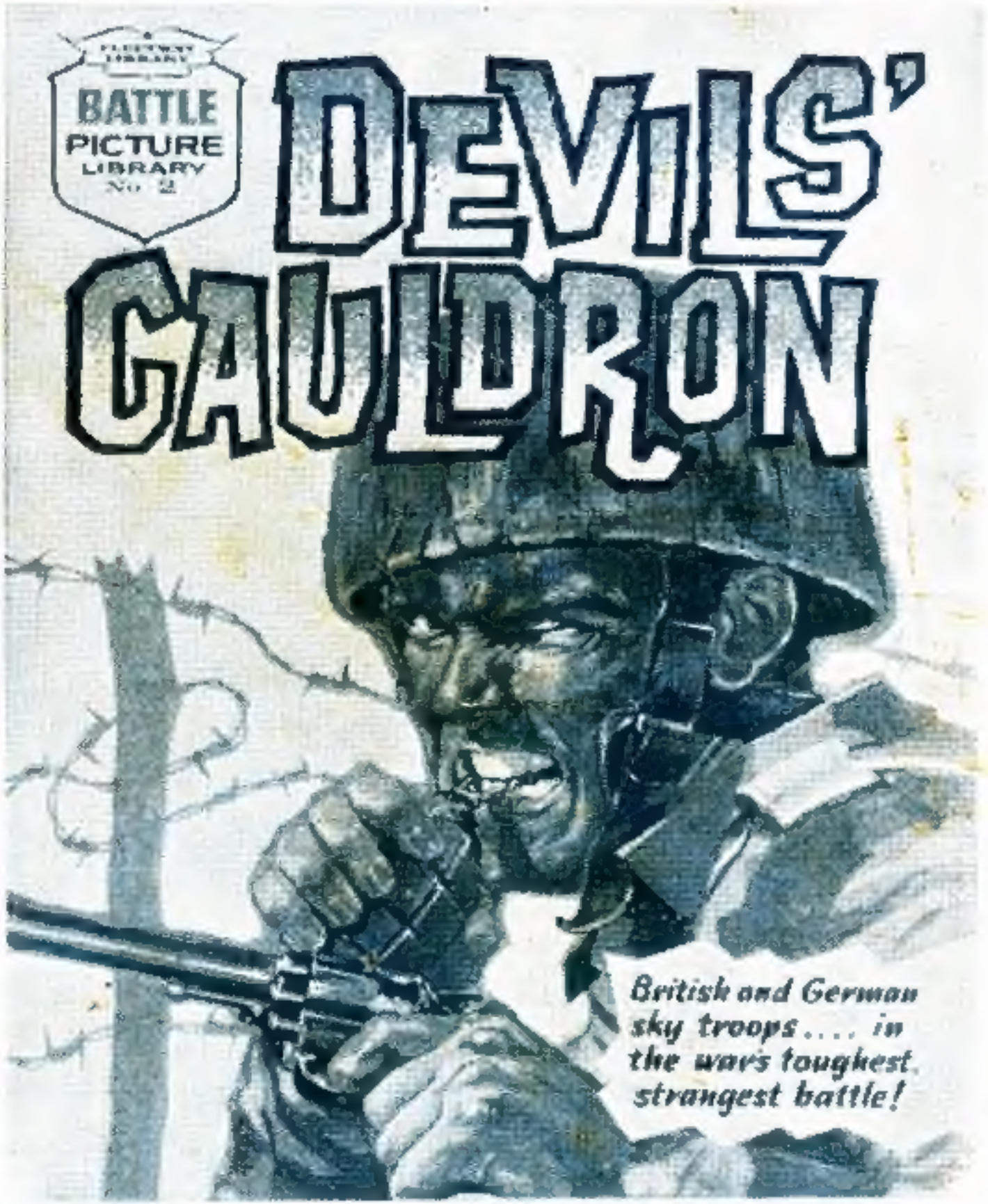
No. 82—FLOATING COFFINS

Next month's **FOUR** thrilling **WAR PICTURE LIBRARY** issues, on sale February 6th, are :—

No. 84—STRIKE SQUADRON
No. 85—BREAK-THROUGH
No. 86—FIELD OF VALOUR
No. 87—COLOURS FLYING

NEW! On Sale Monday, 16th. January.

BATTLE PICTURE LIBRARY



TWO Dramatic Issues Every Month!